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THE

VOLUNTARY SYSTEM:

CAN IT SUPPLY THE PLACE OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH?

WITH RECENT FACTS AND STATISTICS FROM AMERICA.

BY

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LONDON:

BELL AND DALDY, 187, FLEET STREET.

BATH: R. E. PEACH, No. 8, BRIDGE STREET.

1860.

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WHATEVER difference of opinion there may be as to the answer to this question, all will admit that it is a reasonable one; that it is one which the defenders of the Church have a right to ask, and which its assailants are bound to answer. Nay more, that it is just the question which the English people will ask, and let us hope will insist on having satisfactorily answered, before they consent to the destruction of their National Established Church.

The English are pre-eminently a practical people. They are not given to making wars abroad nor yet revolutions at home for an idea. They will not hastily proceed to change or to abolish any one of their laws or customs merely because it is not abstractedly and theoretically considered the very ideal of perfection. They will persist in asking all reformers and innovators, not, "Is this institution you would have us alter the best conceivable thing of its kind?" but, "Can you give us anything better in its place? and if you can, what will it cost to make the change? for it is possible that your proposed improvement even if it be one, may not be worth the price that we should

have to pay for it, and in that case we would prefer remaining as we are."

And if this be the habit, the wise and cautious habit, of the English nation with respect to the smallest change in the least important matter, there can be little doubt that they will so act with respect to so vast a change in so important a matter as the substitution of the Voluntary system for the Established Church. —I say so vast a change, and so important a matter, for truly to hear some men talk one would suppose that this was one of the simplest and safest changes imaginable. "Only abolish the Establishment—only pass an act of Parliament converting all its endowments to secular uses, and you will see what glorious results will follow." Only abolish the Establishment! And what is this Establishment which it is thus coolly proposed to abolish by a stroke of the pen upon the statute book? It is an institution which, whether for good or for evil, has struck its roots deep down and spread them wide through all our English soil. In its slow growth of centuries it has come to be connected more or less closely with nearly every other institution of the realm—with the Throne, with both houses of Parliament, with our Universities, with our naval and military Establishments, with our jurisprudence, with our great systems of popular education, of poor relief and criminal reformation. It has its local habitation and its home in every city and town, in every village and hamlet, in our land. It has entwined itself with the habits and the customs, the memories and traditions, the social life, the religion, the very language of the great majority of the English people. And do men really suppose that an institution such as this is to be "abolished" by an act of Parliament like a highway-rate or a turnpike trust? Do they imagine that they can uproot it from its place and cast it away like some small weed of recent growth, or that it will come away from its deep hold without a terrible upheaving of all the surrounding soil, without leaving a deep wide scar behind, that all the voluntary after-growth of centuries will neither fill up nor conceal? Have they ever paused to think of all that they may tear up with the Church, or of all that it may strike down in its fall? Do they really know that it is nothing less than a great

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social, moral, religious,-as well as political revolution that they are preparing to effect, and one which cannot be effected without an agitation and a strife that will shake England to her centre?

The English people do not love revolutions, and before they will consent to make such an one as this would be, they must see good and sufficient reasons—reasons amounting to an absolute and imperative necessity, such as alone could justify so dangerous and so critical an experiment upon their whole constitution. Those who propose it to them must be prepared to shew not merely that the Established Church has its defects, nay its great defects,—all things human have; nor yet that the Voluntary System has some merits—few things human are so very bad as to have none; but that the Established Church is so radically and incurably vicious, so largely and dangerously mischievous, and the Voluntary System so immensely and overwhelmingly superior to it, so free from all its defects, so powerful and efficient by its own evident merits, that it is the manifest and imperative duty of the nation, even at the cost and the risk of such a revolution as we have pictured, to make this change without delay.

In stating the question therefore between the Church and the Voluntary System as I have stated it, I have not done justice to the cause of the Church. The real question is not whether Voluntaryism could supply the place of the Church, but whether it could supply it so much better as to make it worth the while of the English people to make the exchange. While, therefore, it is enough for us to shew that the Establishment is equal to, or not greatly inferior to Voluntaryism, our adversaries are bound to shew that Voluntaryism is very decidedly and greatly superior to our Establishment.

Now, this comparison between these two systems may be made in either of two ways. We might, first, compare the PRINCIPLE OF VOLUNTARYISM with the PRINCIPLE OF AN ESTABLISHMENT, and ask, which system is best calculated to do the work of the Christian Church; or we might, secondly, compare the RESULTS OF VOLUNTARYISM with the RESULTS OF ESTABLISHMENTS, and ask which has best done that work. Now we do not shrink from the application of either of these two tests, but we require that

they be made fairly—that is to say, that theory be compared with theory, and practice with practice; not theory on the one side with practice on the other; not the one system as it ought to be, with the other system as it is; not the plan of the architect on paper, with all the grace and finish of his original design, with the realization of that plan in stone and mortar, with all the defects of the material and the errors of the builder, or the injuries of time and weather. And yet, this is just the unfairness which the Voluntaryists are so frequently guilty of. When they speak of Voluntaryism, it is Voluntaryism according to its ideal—Voluntaryism as they think it ought to be, or as they think they see it in the New Testament. But when they speak of the Church Establishment, it is the Establishment as it is, or, rather, as they see it, with all its real faults magnified and coloured to the utmost, and with a great many others which exist only in their own imagination. A remarkable instance of this unfairness is to be seen in a pamphlet on this subject by Mr. Miall, the ablest, and, I regret to add, the bitterest and most unscrupulous of our opponents. This pamphlet is entitled "The Fixed and the Voluntary Principles. Eight Letters to the Earl of Shaftesbury." After a glowing description of the Voluntary principle, according to its *ideal*—an ideal, I venture to say, never yet realized on earth—Mr. Miall thus speaks of the "fixed principle."

"I ought also to premise that by the 'Fixed Principle' I understand, not merely a permanent provision in support of gospel preaching and ordinances, but that provision subject to such conditions as we know by actual experience to be practically inseparable from it. Looking at the principle in its known tangible and realized form, and not only as we may conceive of its abstractedly, my object will be to show that it is out of keeping with the genius of scriptural Christianity." *(Fixed and Voluntary Principles*, p. 15.)

"Looking at the principle in its known, and tangible, and realized form." Let us do so by all means, and let us look at the Voluntary Principle in the same way also. But let us not compare an abstract and unrealized voluntaryism with a tangible and realized establishment. Rip up, if you will, all the sores on the one side; we will do the same on the other. Keep, if you

will, to the abstract principle on your side; we will do the same on ours. This would be fair, but this would not suit Mr. Miall's purpose. Some men love to choose their standing point for the survey of any system to which they are opposed, as Balak advised Balaam to choose his long ago. "Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence." (Numbers xxiii. 13.)

I propose to make this comparison somewhat more fairly; and, in order to do so, let us in the first place DEFINE the things which we design to compare. WHAT IS THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM? Strange to say, this simple question is one which very few voluntaryists seem to have troubled themselves with asking; at least, if we may judge from the extraordinary arguments which they bring for the most part in support of it. Mr. Miall however has favoured us with more than one definition, both of the Voluntary and of the Fixed Principle. I am quite content to accept these, and no voluntaryist will object to my doing so.

In the tenth page of the pamphlet already referred to, Mr. Miall, addressing Lord Shaftesbury, thus defines the "Fixed Principle." "My lord, when you spoke of the 'Fixed,' in contradistinction to the 'Voluntary Principle,' I imagine you must be understood to have meant *that system of making provision for the ministry and ordinances of Christ's gospel which attains the object, whether by public or private endowment, whether in whole or in part, by means irrespective of the will of those who attend upon them, and restricted in use to a specified locality.*" (Pages 9 and 10.) Now as this principle, so defined, is in contradistinction to the Voluntary System, that system must be understood to mean, the "making provision for the ministry and ordinances, NEITHER BY PUBLIC NOR PRIVATE ENDOWMENT, NEITHER IN WHOLE NOR IN PART, BY MEANS IRRESPECTIVE OF THE WILL OF THOSE WHO ATTEND UPON THEM, AND NOT RESTRICTED TO ANY SPECIFIED LOCALITY."

Again, in the same page, Mr. Miall, still referring to the "fixed principle," says: "Here, if I understand you, you deem it requisite that the ministers and ordinances of Christ's Gospel

should be supported by SOMETHING BEYOND THE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF ATTENDANTS" (p. 10). Clearly therefore, if we understand Mr. Miall, the "voluntary principle" is that the ministers and ordinances of Christ's Gospel should be supported by NOTHING BEYOND THE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF ATTENDANTS. And, accordingly, Mr. Miall defines the voluntary system to be "the willing ministration, by a people to their pastor, of their temporal things, in grateful recompense for his spiritual things" (p. 33).

Thus, both negatively and positively, we have obtained very clear definitions of the two rival systems.

Voluntaryism, as defined by Mr. Miall, is—THE MINISTER AND ORDINANCES OF THE GOSPEL DEPENDENT ON NOTHING BUT THE FREE GIFTS OF ATTENDANTS. The Fixed or Endowment principle as defined, by the same author, is, THE MINISTERS AND ORDINANCES INDEPENDENT, FOR THEIR SUPPORT, OF SUCH FREE GIFTS.

Now it will be seen at once that by this simple mode of definition the question between us and our opponents is clearly and fairly stated, and cleared from the whole mass of mis-statement and irrelevant argument, with which it has been overlaid by ill-informed disputants. The question between Voluntaryists and the defenders of Establishments is distinctly and solely a question as to the support of the ministers and of the ordinances of religion. The one only issue raised is, Should they, or should they not, be entirely dependent upon the free-will offerings of attendants? In other words, the dispute between us is not whether there shall be free gifts in the Church of Christ, but only whether the ministry and ordinances shall be dependent on these free gifts. Not whether there shall be voluntary effort in the Church, but only what is the proper direction, what the proper use and function of such effort.

Now this statement of the question at once disposes of a whole crowd of objections and objectors to the principle of an Establishment. In the first place it disposes of all that long string of Concordance-gathered texts of Scripture, commanding Christians to "give freely," to be "ready to give and glad to distribute,"

and so on; which, with many references to the great success of our voluntary societies, are urged as overwhelming proof of the unscriptural inconsistency of those who with such texts in their Bibles, and such societies at work in the bosom of their Church, yet venture to defend an establishment. As if, forsooth, any one denied that voluntary effort was a Christian duty;—as if we did not quote and enforce these texts in every charity sermon that we preach;—as if it were not part of our case against those who would secularise our endowments, that those endowments are mainly free gifts, and that, therefore, to rob us of them is a wrong both to the living and the dead. There seems to be, in the minds of such reasoners, a sort of confused notion that, wherever the word "free" or "voluntary" occurs, it means their *voluntary system*; and that, because an endowment is inconsistent with this, it must, therefore, be inconsistent and incompatible with any free gifts whatever; or that, because we hold that free gifts have their proper and their important use for many purposes in Christ's Church, therefore, we must admit that they are fit for *all purposes*. As well might it be said that, because we have lately inaugurated a great volunteer movement, therefore, we are bound to "abolish" our standing army; or that, because it is the duty of Christians to give "freely" to the poor, therefore, we should "abolish" our system of compulsory poor-rates; and, that those who maintained the advantage of a standing army and the necessity of poor-rates were guilty of gross inconsistencies, because they promoted volunteering, and recommended private charity.*

* The Scriptural argument does not belong to the subject of this lecture, which professes only to deal with the practical results of Voluntaryism; but I cannot refrain from observing, in passing, that this case of poor-rates affords a very simple *reductio ad absurdum* of all the arguments against an Establishment, drawn from the silence of the New Testament on the subject of compulsory provision for ministers. These arguments all run thus:—

The New Testament says much about the support of Christian ministers by the free gifts of Christians.

But it says nothing about their compulsory support by the State.

Ergo. State support of the ministry is clearly unscriptural.

This argument will equally prove the sinfulness of poor-rates—as thus:—

The New Testament says much as to the duty of Christian liberality to the poor.

But the New Testament says nothing as to the compulsory support of the poor by the State.

Ergo. The compulsory support of the poor by the State is clearly unscriptural.

But secondly, The Voluntary Principle, as defined by Mr. Miall, is opposed to all endowments whatever, private as well as public. For it is clear that a private endowment, equally with a public one, provides for "the support of the ministry and ordinances by something beyond the Voluntary Contributions of the attendants." A private endowment equally with a public endowment places the minister in a position of independence of the free gifts of his hearers. Mr. Miall, more logical than most of his followers, sees this clearly enough, and accordingly, he consistently denounces private as well as public endowments. Besides a few passing sneers at the "piety of our ancestors," who bestowed them, he devotes a page of his pamphlet to pointing out all their evils, telling us "that they rest upon two essentially erroneous assumptions;" that "they are a kind of dogmatic taking care for posterity, that savours a great deal more of human self-sufficiency, than self-sacrifice;" and questioning even "whether God has given us any right" to make them.

Whatever may be thought of the good taste of these remarks, they deserve the credit of logical consistency. Mr. Miall is not afraid to follow out his principles to their necessary conclusions. But these conclusions are manifestly fatal to a large class of objections which are brought against state endowments, but which apply equally to all endowments whatever; for instance, all appeals to the poverty of the primitive teachers of Christianity, and their entire dependence upon the free gifts of their flocks; all complaints that a State Endowment tends to make ministers "lazy," "unspiritual," "worldly," that it "stereotypes error," that it "gives law courts jurisdiction in questions of doctrine and Church discipline;" all, and each of these, lie equally against any endowment, or the possession of any property whatever. If the Apostles and their followers had no state endowments, neither had they any private endowments. If a state provision affects the spirituality of the ministry by generating laziness and worldliness, so does a fixed and permanent income, provided by the "dogmatic caretaking" of "a pious ancestor." If the covenant between Church and State tends to stereotype that form of belief and discipline

upon condition of maintaining which the Church obtained her endowment, equally so, do definitions of doctrine and prescriptions of ritual in trust deeds, and wills of "pious" founders.

And equally too, is the interpretation of these latter subject to the decision of law courts, whenever a question arises as to whether they have been adhered to by the parties in possession. Have those who profess themselves so horrified at the sight of a Lord Chancellor or a committee of the Privy Council deciding our doctrinal differences, forgotten the cases in which they have had to call in such aid to decide their own? Is the case of Lady Hewley's charities—is the Cardross case, and many other similar ones, in which lawyers have argued, and judges decided points of doctrine or discipline for Nonconformists, in any respect different from the Gorham or the Denison cases? And have not these cases all alike come before the law-courts for decision, for one and the same reason, simple and sufficing, that they are cases affecting the possession of *property*—of endowment of some kind or other; and that, because wherever there is property there must be certain legal conditions affecting the tenure of that property, which, as often as any question arises concerning them, must be interpreted and defined by the proper legal tribunals of the country.

Nay, more; it is clear that these private endowments are open to the favourite objection to State endowments—that they necessitate the use of fines and imprisonments, and coercion in the support of religion. If by coercion for the support of religion is meant fining or imprisoning a man because he will not *profess* a given religion, the charge against the State Church is a false one; but, if it means compelling him to *support* a given religious system by payment charged upon his property, the charge lies equally against private endowments. For it is to be presumed that the trustees or possessors of any house or lands, or charge on house or lands belonging to any nonconformist body, would not hesitate to put the whole machinery of the law in force against a refractory tenant, and to fine and imprison him, if needs were, until he paid his share to the support of their religion.

What more does a clergyman do who compels payment of his tithes?

Let our opponents, then, argue fairly. Let them say, if they please, as Mr. Miall says, We consider all endowments bad; but we consider State endowments worst of all. This is, at least, logical and consistent; but let them not, while tenaciously holding their own private endowments, bring against State endowments arguments which apply with equal force against both.

In the third place, The Voluntary system is quite distinct from, and quite opposed to, another system which is frequently confounded with it—I mean the Pew system.

The system of pew-rents is certainly not one in which the ministers and ordinances are supported by the free gifts of the attendants. The minister on this system does not first "freely give" himself and his ministrations to the people, content to wait for the "free gifts" which shall be furnished him by "their affectionate solicitude," in return. He first buys or hires a chapel, duly provided with comfortable accommodation, pewed, cushioned, lighted, heated, and beadled; and he proceeds to let out this accommodation, and his own ministry, and the ordinances of the Gospel with it, to those who can afford to pay for them. They have actually been disposed of by auction in America. Sometimes this plan is improved upon, by the chapel being built or purchased by certain trustees, as a money investment, who then proceed, before hiring out their sittings, to hire a popular minister, to whom they pay a certain income, and then hire him out with the accommodation and the ordinances. This is not the Voluntary system; this is the *Commercial* system. On this system ministers and ministrations, accommodation and ordinances, are all marketable commodities; and their price, like that of all merchandise, rises and falls with the value or scarcity of the article. A fashionable chapel, in a fashionable locality, with a fashionable preacher, has a very different market value, lets its sittings at a very different rate, from that of an unfashionable chapel, in an unfashionable locality, with an unfashionable preacher.

If this be Voluntaryism, it certainly is not the Voluntaryism

of the New Testament, to which our opponents are so fond of appealing. The primitive Church, we are told, over and over again, had no tithes, and no church rates; had it any pew rents? Do we read that Paul was appointed by the elders to a fashionable church at Ephesus? or that James possessed an eligible proprietary chapel at Jerusalem? Does the pew rent system provide for the preaching of the gospel to the poor? Does it invite all alike to come and buy its wine and milk "without money and without price?" Does it give to the poor man in "vile raiment" the same place in its assemblies that it gives to the "man with a gold ring and in goodly apparel"? Does it give to every man, however poor, an equal right to the accommodation and the ordinances and the ministrations of the house of God? Is it not the vice and the curse of this system that it puts the temporal interests of the minister in direct antagonism to the spiritual interests of the poor? That if you allot a sufficient number of sittings to furnish accommodation for the poor, you do so at the expense of the clergyman, who lives by those sittings; while, if you reserve a sufficient number of them to give him a decent maintenance, you do so at the expense of the poor, for whom those sittings should be free? In one word, this modern pew system is nothing but an unsuccessful compromise between the liberality and self-denial of free gifts, and the security and competency of endowments; combining some of the worst evils of both, and retaining none of the advantages of either; an awkward make-shift, by which the comfortable and well-to-do members of society supply themselves with a religious luxury, at the cost either of the half-paid ministry, or the half-taught poor! Most certainly it has nothing in common with the Voluntary Principle, either as defined by Mr. Miall, or as appealed for to Scripture by our modern Voluntaryists.

And this consideration disposes at once of a large class, not of *objections*, but of *objectors;* of all those, namely, who while loudly and boastfully appealing to Scripture for warrant and sanction for their *Voluntary System*, are themselves living and ministering upon the *Commercial system.*

We say to all such Scriptural Voluntaryists, Be scriptural; give up your private endowments; "abolish" all your pew-

rents; go forth, like the apostles, without scrip or purse, or change of raiment; throw yourselves fully and fearlessly upon the voluntary principle, as you tell us they did. Do this, one and all of you—everywhere—work out your own system fully; and then, if you find it succeed, come to us, and ask us to do the like. And, be it observed, this would be a far easier and a far more hopeful task than the one in which you are now engaged. You propose, with a kindness for which we cannot be sufficiently grateful, to liberate us from the cares of wealth and the patronage of power, by secularizing all our State endowments. The process is a difficult, and may be a very tedious one. You may never live to see it accomplished. Suppose you attempt the simpler one of liberating yourselves. "*Zonam qui perdidit ibit.*" Your soldiers will mount to the breach all the more bravely and fiercely, when they have freed themselves from the weight of their own purses. Your assault upon the Ai of our establishment will be more successful when you have got rid of the wedge of gold and goodly Babylonish garments of endowments, and pew-rents, and State grants for schools. Meanwhile, when you talk to us of the Voluntary principle, you must expect us to ask, What voluntary principle do you mean?

Do you mean Scriptural Voluntaryism? Then give up your endowments and your pew rents.

Do you mean modern Voluntaryism, with its endowments and its pew rents? Then give up your appeal to Scripture.

Now as modern Voluntaryism is really little more than a system of private endowments and pew rents, I might be content to close this argument here, and wait until the Voluntary System, primitive, pure, and simple, had been really tried before considering the question whether it could supply the place of the Established Church. But, for argument sake, I will give the name of the Voluntary System to modern Voluntaryism, improperly so called, with its endowments and its pew rents, and proceed to enquire whether this Voluntaryism, "known, tangible, and realized," as Mr. Miall would say, can supply the place of the Established Church?

The great work of the Church of Christ, in this world, is

two-fold. It is, first, Missionary Work. Secondly, Pastoral Work. To make men Christians, and to keep them so, is the mission of all Christian men, and especially of the Christian ministry. Can either of these works be done by the Voluntary System, as well by an Establishment?

First then—*Can Missionary work be done upon the Voluntary principle as efficiently as it can upon the Fixed principle?*

Now, in the first place, I assert that you cannot take the first step in Missionary work without a violation of the pure Voluntary principle. Every missionary sent out by our great missionary societies, is sent out in direct and necessary defiance of it. Remember what that principle is. It is "the minister and ordinance dependent for support upon *nothing* beyond the voluntary contributions of attendants." How can the missionary depend upon the voluntary offerings of the unconverted heathen? Does he depend upon them? Does he not go out with his "fixed" "permanent" provision by way of stipend from the parent society? Is he not to the heathen, to whom he ministers, virtually an endowed minister? They do not pay him. They have not chosen him, nor invited him; nor can they remove him at their pleasure. He is as completely independent of them, as much imposed upon them by the choice of others, as ever was the nominee of a prime minister or lay patron upon an unwilling parish.

But waiving this objection, and granting that our missionary societies do proceed upon the Voluntary System; I would ask in the second place, What is the great aim of all these societies? What is it that they are all seeking, striving, praying to effect? Is it not to cover the lands of the heathen as widely and as rapidly as possible with missionaries? Is not the cry from every station abroad, and from every committee-room and platform at home, still "more men," and again and again, "more men"? The fields, we are told on every side, are white for the harvest; but where are the labourers, and where the means of sending and maintaining them?

What then have all our Voluntary efforts done to supply this pressing need? Great as those efforts have been, glorious as their results have been, when measured by the difficulties to be

overcome, or by the infinite preciousness of the souls of the converts; yet measured against the number of unconverted heathen, against the vast tracts of heathendom, in which the sound of the Gospel has never been heard, they are as nothing. One lamp for all London, or one well of water for all its citizens, are illustrations that have been used to convey, and but faintly to convey, the utter failure of all our societies together to light up the darkness of the myriad souls that are lying in the shadow of death, to give the water of life to the millions and tens of millions of those who are perishing for the lack of it.

Now let us suppose, that some heathen ruler—say the emperor of China—were converted to Christianity, and were to offer to our missionary societies a grant of land in every square mile or so of his vast territory, and promise to build on each of them, a church, a parsonage, and a school. The Voluntaryists would of course reject such an offer with pious indignation. A missionary would doubtless at once be sent out by them to convert the Emperor to Voluntaryism; to beseech him in the name of English Christianity, at least in the name of all that was purest and holiest in English Christianity, not to do this great wickedness—not to interpose this grievous hindrance to the spread of the Gospel!

Well, we shall consider presently what the great evil of such a sinful course would be. One thing however is clear, that it would have effected what all our Voluntary efforts have not yet effected, what Voluntaryism never has done since the birth of Christianity until now, and what I believe it never will or can do. It would have provided "means of religious instruction," upon a scale commensurate with the wants of a nation. It would have overtaken with a sufficient and a timely supply, the spiritual destitution of an entire people. When has Voluntaryism done this? Can its advocates name one race which it has entirely christianized? What nation has been born of it? What kingdom has it ever brought to own the name of Christ? We know on the other hand, what the "Fixed principle," and the much despised "Piety of our ancestors," has done for England and for Europe. Truly, the evils of a state

Endowment must needs be great indeed to counterbalance this one great, immediate, certain good, which we know that it can, and that Voluntaryism cannot, effect—the spiritual conquest, the entire and complete conversion to Christianity of whole nations. Voluntaryism may have wonderful powers, but it has not yet had power to produce a Christendom.

But these missionaries, whom we have supposed placed by a state endowment, over the whole of a heathen country, would be missionaries, not only of Christianity, but of civilization. The indirect blessings of the Gospel are second, but second only, to its direct blessings. When the glory of the Lord was seen by the prophet, "high and lifted up," his train filled the temple. When the grain of mustard seed had grown to be a great tree, the birds of the air lodged in the branches of it. Wherever the Gospel comes, it brings in its train unnumbered blessings, even for those who accept not its teachings: its sunshine and its rain fall upon the unjust as well as upon the just. Purer morals, laws more just and merciful, a nobler and a gentler social life, a civilization of a type at once the highest and most lasting, make the zone of dimmer light, which, ever widening and brightening, spreads itself around the Goshen of the Israel of God, and which, unlike the light the ancient Goshen knew, penetrates ever deeper and deeper into the Egyptian darkness of surrounding heathendom.

We contend then, that, even if the Christian missionary had never yet succeeded in converting one single soul to true vital Christianity, yet that it were an enterprise worthy of all, and more than all, we have ever done to forward it—to plant all over every heathen country the missionaries of a religion which necessarily and invariably civilizes and elevates, even where it does not save. Merely on the ground of philanthropy and of patriotism, we assert that a national endowment of Christianity is the interest and the duty even of a pagan ruler.

And, if this be true of the Christian missionary abroad, it is equally true of the Christian missionary at home—for, alas! our home-work is still largely missionary work. "The home heathen" is a phrase with which we are but too familiar in these days. To these heathen, the Gospel must be brought,

and brought to their very doors, and pressed upon their acceptance: they will not seek it; the demand for religion, unhappily, unlike that for other things men want, is in inverse ratio to the supply. Those who need it most will always seek it least. "He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." Now we contend, and we think we can prove, that a state endowment, with its territorial distribution of Christian missionaries, alone can overtake the wants of this heathen population—heathen, we say, mainly because the State has neglected to make such provision "in timely abundance." And further, we assert, that even if such missionaries never succeeded in saving one human soul, yet the social and temporal benefits of their establishment would more than repay the cost to the State. We say that the parsonage and the Church, and their inevitably accompanying school, are the centres of civilization wherever they are placed; that they secure to the surrounding district the presence of an educated gentleman—even if he be no more—with his family, bound to be by virtue of his position—expected to be by public opinion—the guide, the friend, the adviser, the benefactor, the example of all around him. And I maintain that if the Church of England did no more than this—and even its bitterest enemies will not deny that in the immense majority of cases it does this—there is good and sufficient reason why the English nation should hesitate ere they consented to its destruction.

But here we are met with the reply—This home missionary work is just the very point in which your State Endowment has been found to fail. It has not supplied religious teaching in sufficient abundance to meet the wants of the people; while, on the other hand, the Voluntary System has proved itself fully equal to this task. This is the argument set forth at great length in a pamphlet published by the so-called Liberation Society, entitled, "Voluntaryism in England and Wales, or the Census of 1851." This pamphlet consists of a series of tables compiled from an analysis of Mr. Horace Mann's report of the Religious Census of 1851, with arguments founded on them to

prove the total failure of the Establishment, and the brilliant success of Voluntaryism.

The writer puts his case thus: "At the commencement of this century the Church of England supplied eighty per cent. of all the sittings in places of worship, while Dissent supplied only nineteen per cent. But in the year 1851 the Church supplied only fifty-two per cent., and Dissent forty-eight. The total number of sittings," we are told, "supplied since 1801, has been 5,175,000; of these, 3,927,000, or seventy-five per cent., have been supplied by Dissent, while only 1,248,000, or twenty-four per cent. have been supplied by the Church; or, to put this argument in another form, Dissent, in the course of fifty years, has multiplied its sittings 303 per cent. above the increment of the population, while the Church has fallen short by seventy per cent. of that increase." I wish to state this argument as fairly as possible, though I must do so briefly. But I am not, I think, misrepresenting the pamphlet, when I say, that this is its one argument. Turned and twisted in every possible way, and set in every possible light, it is still one and the same, "Dissent has increased its sittings in a much larger proportion than the Church."

Now from this alleged fact the writer deduces the following inference:—

"That the Church of England, as a State Church, has totally failed—not failed as a Christian organization formed for religious ministration, but as a State appliance intended to maintain for the whole community means of religious instruction and edification, and to provide them in timely abundance, as new exigencies render them necessary."

And this inference is headed in large capitals, "Failure of the State Church Principles."

It would be hardly possible to crowd into the same number of words a greater number of fallacies than are contained in this most extraordinary inference.

In the first place, the facts on which it professes to be based are incorrectly stated. Among the Dissenting places of worship are reckoned 3825 "non-separate" places, that is, schools, or rooms in dwelling-places; while the Church has returned only 223.

But if the Church had returned all its schools, licensed rooms, unlicensed cottages, and lecture rooms, in which services are held, how would the account have stood? To take one instance:

One Clergyman writes—"At St. ———, I had four services in addition to those in the Churches; at ——— two, and sometimes three: at St. ——— one; and here (his present Rectory), three. Thus in *four* of the parishes of England, my own experience would enable me to add *ten* places used for worship in connection with the national Church, in addition to the three Churches reported by me as such."

But, even admitting these figures to be correct, I contend, first, that the test here selected as decisive of the merits of the two systems is an utterly fallacious one.

And, secondly, that even if it were as sound as it is worthless, the inference drawn from it is egregiously false.

This test is utterly fallacious, because it is one of QUANTITY only, omitting all consideration of the QUALITY of accommodation supplied on either side. Every one knows, that an inferior article may be turned out in much greater quantity, and at a far quicker rate, than a superior one; but this would be but a poor reason for substituting the former for the latter. There is no doubt that Mr. Miall and his friends could supply the whole British army with bows and arrows in greater quantity within a given time than the Government could supply it with Armstrong guns and Enfield rifles. But it would not necessarily follow from this one fact that the Government factories had "totally failed, as a state appliance to supply" the army with weapons; much less that the voluntary supply of the more primitive weapons should be held to have so decidedly succeeded, that Government should forthwith "abolish" all its factories and arsenals.

1st, This purely arithmetical test *omits all consideration of the permanence of the sittings supplied.* It takes no note of the fact, that, while a large proportion of dissenting places of worship are rented rooms, or buildings upon rented sites, convertible at any moment to secular purposes, the immense majority of our Churches are built upon sites purchased and set apart for ever by consecration to the service of God, and with some endowment for the support of the minister.

2ndly. It omits all questions *as to the comparative cost of these buildings*, and therefore of the comparative amount of voluntary effort needed to produce them. Our churches, Mr. Horace Mann states, are built at the average cost of £3,000 each; and the actual amount contributed to church building by churchmen in the last fifty years is upwards of seven millions, to say nothing of the vast sums expended upon the restoration of all those noble cathedrals, and old parish churches, which the "piety of our ancestors" raised, and which the piety of their descendants keeps from the decay to which our Liberationists would fain consign them.

3rdly. It takes no notice *of the question as to the distribution of these places of worship.* It does not tell us how far these are locally within the reach of the poor, or how large a proportion of them are respectively located amongst the dwellings only of the rich. Dr. Hume, however, has answered this question. The country is not likely soon to forget his startling revelations as to the migratory propensities of Voluntary chapels in Liverpool. He has shown us how Voluntaryism, "not fixed," as Mr. Miall tells us "to any specified locality," avails itself of its greater freedom to desert the localities inhabited by poverty, and to hasten to those peopled by wealth.

The Rev. George Osborne, Wesleyan Minister, whose manly and honest evidence before the Church Rate Committee does him infinite credit, has also answered this question:

"1775. Has it come within your knowledge that dissenting chapels have been obliged to be closed, in consequence of the richer portion of the community having left the place?

"A. When the middle classes and well-to-do people, who have been in the habit of attending the chapel, go away into the country, or to some suburban residence, it follows almost as a matter of course that the seat rents fail, and another chapel is erected in a suburban district, and the congregation is transferred, and the chapel ceases to be occupied as it was formerly.

"1776. You do not find in your experience that the poor leave the locality?

"A. No, they are fastened to it; *and that one consideration weighs very much with me as to the importance of a territorial provision, which shall be independent of the fluctuations of commerce, and other causes which are constantly occurring.*"

A similar testimony reaches us from America. The

Philadelphia Sunday School Times gives the following account of Voluntary Migrations in New York, in 1859:—

"It is a great question what is to become of the lower wards of the city. Below Canal street is a population of 100,000: in this section are now less than twenty churches and chapels. If crowded to their utmost, they will hold about 21,000. *Some of these churches are contemplating removals up town.* I learn that St. John's Park is to be sold for business lots; and the congregation worshipping in Laight Street Baptist Chapel go up town. This Church is opposite the park, and owns a part of it. *Other churches are likely to follow.* What shall be done for the vast crowds left behind? Here are now about 190,000 persons who attend no Protestant place of worship. There are in our city 60,000 young men, and 70,000 young women, who are not in our Sunday Schools; many of these are in our lower wards. From these come our rowdies and criminals of every grade. They fill our prisons and penitentiaries."—*Philadelphia Sunday School Times*, 1859.

Voluntaryism in America seems to eschew the company of "publicans and sinners" quite as carefully as it does in England.

The Church of England builds no such locomotive places of worship. Her "fixed principle" keeps her where she plants herself, the constant and abiding, and often the solitary, witness for God's truth, and messenger of man's charity, among the poor and the outcast. Her lighthouses may be more slowly built, and at a greater cost, than the cheaper constructions of her rivals; but, unlike them, they do not drift with the tide. They stand where the "piety" of their builders placed them, fixed and unmoved, casting out their steady light upon the raging waves and dangerous quicksands of human passion and of human sin, long after the slight skiffs once anchored near them have been wrecked in the storm, or sought a coward safety in some adjacent haven.

Lastly, this numerical test *takes no notice of the amount of free sittings provided by each system for the poor.* The law of England gives to every parishioner a legal title to a free sitting in his parish church. He has a right to sit there, without being indebted to the charity, or dependent upon the courtesy of any man. And, if he is ever deprived of that right, it is by an illegal encroachment, which the churchwardens of our "Law" Church are bound, at his bidding, to redress. Does the Voluntary system, whether in our Church or out of it, make such provision for the poor? No: on that system, the Church

is free to the poor man—as Horne Tooke once said, the London Tavern is free to him—"provided he pays for what he gets there."* Or, if an attempt is made to provide him with free sittings, it can only be done at the expense, not of the "attendants" but of the poor clergyman, out of whose pocket, and whose alone, comes all the provision of free sittings which the Voluntary system allows the poor. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," is the liberal precept which enjoins the provision of a liberal maintenance for the Christian ministry. "To the poor the Gospel is preached," is declared by Christ to be the distinguishing glory and excellence of his kingdom. Modern Voluntaryism can only attain one of these ends by the sacrifice of the other. It is only by muzzling the ox, that it procures a reasonable supply of corn for the poor. It is only by stinting the spiritual food of the poor, that it continues to give the minister his daily bread.†

* The testimony of Mr. Horace Mann on this point is most decisive. Speaking of the local efforts made to provide religious accommodation in the great towns, he tells us, "That it unfortunately but rarely happens that such local effort is aroused, except to obtain accommodation for an increase of the middle classes, who already appreciate religious ordinances, and are able and disposed to bear the pecuniary burden requisite in order to obtain them. The effect has been that the considerable addition made in recent years to the religious edifices of large towns has been in very near proportion to the rapid growth, in the same interval, of the prosperous middle classes; but the far more rapid increase, in this period, in the number of artizans and labourers has taken place without a corresponding increase of religious means *for them*. The only prominent examples within my knowledge, of a vigorous effort to relieve a local want without waiting for local demand, is the movement which, some years ago, the Bishop of London originated, and successfully, beyond anticipation, prosecuted, for providing fifty new churches for the metropolitan parishes. And yet, it really seems that, without some missionary enterprise similar to this, the mighty task of even mitigating spiritual destitution in our towns and cities hardly can be overcome. I am not aware of any special agencies connected with the various dissenting bodies, which attain the objects here described. *The necessarily self-supporting character of all the institutions founded by Dissenters, renders it, in their case, almost indispensable to make the erection of a chapel dependent on the prospect of an adequate return.* Hence, though the congregational and Baptist bodies have established recently their 'Chapel Building Societies,' the operation of these central boards is practically limited, if not by an actual local demand, yet by the prospect of a speedy local sympathy among the middle classes."

† Mr. Morley's evidence before the Church-rate Committee of the House of Lords on this point, is as valuable as it is candid.

Q. 737.—I suppose that as regards providing religious accommodation for the poor, you think that ought to be left entirely to Voluntary effort?

But this test is utterly fallacious, for another reason—*it assumes that the supply of sittings is the only "means" of religious instruction.*

The only question all through this pamphlet is "the number of sittings;" and from its alleged deficiency in the supply of them, and from this alone, it is inferred that the State Church has totally failed to supply—not *one of the* "means," but "means" of religious instruction.

It is hardly possible to imagine anything more ingeniously unfair than this dexterous substitution of a general term for a particular one in this argument. Sittings are not all the "means" of religious instruction in this country, but only *one* of the means—and that too the least important.

There are two other "means of instruction" which this pamphleteer carefully leaves out of his calculation. One is the religious education of the young in schools. Of this, the Church supplies eighty per cent., and Dissent only twenty per cent. in the week day schools; while the Church gives forty per cent. against sixty per cent. of Dissenting teaching, in the cheaper and easier work of Sunday schools. Or, in other words, the Church gives six days' teaching, essentially and decidedly religious; superintending and promoting, at the same time, the secular instruction, and social improvement of four English children to every one that Dissent so educates; while, against this, Dissent can only claim to give one day's religious teaching to six children for every four so taught by the Church. There can be little question as to which system best supplies this "means of religious instruction."

But an infinitely more important means of religious instruction and edification than either schools or sittings is THE LIVING MINISTRY. All who know anything of the facts of the case—Dissenters and Churchmen alike—testify, with one mouth, that this is the great want of our times; that in vain shall we multiply our churches and chapels—in vain increase our accommo-

In most of our chapels we are enabled to secure what we call free sittings.

Q. 738.—Can you at all state what proportion of free sittings there are?

The proportion is very small indeed. I am bound to make that acknowledgment, and it is a difficulty.

dation, even up to and beyond the requirements of our population—unless with it we supply the active, aggressive, house to house visitation of a Christian pastorate.

On this head, Mr. Horace Mann's opinion will be that of every man whose opinion is worth listening to :—

"What is eminently needed is, an agency to bring into the buildings thus provided those who are indifferent or hostile to religious services. *The present rate of church and chapel increase brings before our view the prospect, at no distant period, of a state of things in which there will be small deficiency of structures where to worship, but a lamentable lack of worshippers.* There is, indeed, already, even in our present circumstances, too conspicuous a difference between accommodation and attendance. Many districts might be indicated where, although the provision in religious buildings would suffice for barely half of those who might attend, yet scarcely more than half of even this inadequate provision is appropriated. Teeming populations often now surround half-empty churches, which would probably remain half empty even if the sittings were all free. The people who refuse to hear the Gospel in the church must have it brought to them in their own haunts. If ministers, by standing every Sunday in the desk or pulpit, fail to attract the multitudes around, they must, by some means, make their invitations heard beyond the church or chapel walls. The myriads of our labouring population, really as ignorant of Christianity as were the heathen Saxons at St. Augustine's landing, are as much in need of missionary enterprise to bring them into practical acquaintance with its doctrines; and, until the dingy territories of our alienated nation are invaded by *aggressive* Christian agency, we cannot reasonably look for that more general attendance on religious ordinances which, with many other blessings, would, it is anticipated, certainly succeed an active war of such benevolent hostilities."

Even without any appeal to statistics, common sense would tell us that, if we must choose between the living ministry and the brick and mortar building in which he is to minister, there can be no question that we should choose the former, sure that in the end the latter will follow; and that, meanwhile, we have secured some preaching of the Gospel, if it were but in the open air—some ministration of the ordinances, if it were but at the bed-sides of the sick and the dying.

And now, let us see whether Voluntaryism or an Establishment best supplies this "means of religious instruction."

The number of Church of England ordained Clergymen in England and Wales according to the last census, is 17,390. The number of ordained Dissenting ministers of all kinds, including Roman Catholic priests, is 8,696. The number of Protestant dissenting ministers is only 6,405. But though Roman

Catholic priests have very little to do with the Voluntary System, either in theory or in practice, we will give Voluntaryism the benefit of them; and it will then appear that it provides *exactly one half the number of ministers* supplied by the Establishment.

Let us now see what is the ratio of ordained ministers to places of worship respectively.

The number of Church of England places of worship returned in the census, is 14,077; the number of clergymen, 17,390; *giving an excess of clergy over places of worship, of more than one fourth.* The number of Protestant dissenting ministers is 6,405; while the number of their places of worship, is 20,020; *giving an excess of places of worship over ministers of more than two thirds.*

But let us make this comparison on a smaller scale. Let us compare the supply of ministers, by one large body of Voluntaryists in this country, with that given by the Church; and this will be a perfectly fair comparison; for we are now considering, not the total amount supplied (in which case of course the Church should be compared as above with all the Dissenting bodies together), but the ratio of ministerial provision to that of places of worship.

The Year Book of the Congregationalists for 1860—in which, by the way, the Church Establishment is denounced as "a blunder and a sin," and "Church of Englandism" ranked with "Popery, neology, infidelity, and Erastianism, as among the enemies of Protestant and Evangelical Christianity"—thus sets forth the success of that body in the great work of providing pastors for the flock,—the work, in attempting which, it seems we have so frightfully "blundered and sinned."

The total number of Congregational Chapels in England and Wales is 3,312; the total number of ministers is 2,004; leaving the number of chapels without a settled ministry, 1,308, or *considerably more than one-third of the whole.* But from the above number of ministers should be deducted 433, who, from age, infirmity, or other causes, have no pastoral charge; and this would leave the number of chapels without a settled ministry no less than 1,745, *or very nearly one half.*

Now, however large a reduction we may make from the 17,390 Church of England Clergy on the ground of age, infirmity, or other causes, preventing pastoral work, no one will contend that it would reduce them even to a number not exceeding that of her places of worship, much less to a number falling far below that. Certainly no one can lay to the charge of the "blundering and sinful" enemy of Protestant Christianity that she leaves nearly one half of her flocks without shepherds.

A less invidious comparison of the relative power of the two systems to supply a sufficient ministry may be made within the limits of our own church, where, as our opponents so often remind us, the Voluntary System is largely at work. In the report of the Committee of the House of Lords on Spiritual Destitution there are returns from eight Dioceses in England, including London and Manchester, of the number of parishes containing more than 5,000 parishioners, and of the number of places of worship, and of ministers in each.

The result from seven of these is, places of worship, 743; number of clergy, 1,282; shewing an excess of ministers over places of worship of no less than 539.

But, in the remaining diocese, the number of clergy is only one more than the number of churches, being seventy-five to seventy-four. Now the remarkable circumstance is, that this diocese, Llandaff, in South Wales, is by far the poorest of all our dioceses. But the Voluntary principle has just as full scope, and is worked just as efficiently by our Pastoral Aid and Additional Curates Societies, in this diocese, as in any of the others. What then makes this great difference in the ministerial supply? Evidently this: that in the other dioceses the larger endowments enable the rectors and vicars to employ curates, while in Llandaff the miserably small endowments make this an impossibility; thus throwing the Church for her supply upon the Voluntary system, which here, as everywhere else, fails utterly "to meet the exigencies of the case."

And the reason why it does so fail—the reason why, on the Voluntary system, the supply of ministers will always fall far short of its proper ratio to the supply of sittings,

and still more to the wants of the entire population—is obvious enough.

The supply of sittings is the cheaper, and the easier task of the two. It is comparatively easy, by a sudden and spasmodic effort, to gather together enough money to purchase a room, or even to build a Church; but it is a very different matter to keep up that steady and continuous effort, that sustained self denial, which will provide a sufficient maintenance year after year for the man who is to minister there. It is one thing to rent a room, and fit it up with benches and a pulpit. It is quite another thing to feed and clothe a minister, and his wife, and his children, as they ought to be fed and clothed. The poor parson requires something more than a coat of paint every three years, to keep him and his in good repair.

And it is also to be remembered, that, in supplying this brick and mortar accommodation for any district, the quality of the supply may be lowered to meet the character of that district: a small room, or a very humble Church, may be built to hold some fifty or hundred worshippers for a small sum. But the clergyman who is to minister to these worshippers ought to be just as able and as well educated a man, as he who ministers to five hundred or five thousand.

The expense therefore of the merely material part of the supply, the sittings, may be almost indefinitely diminished according to the circumstances of the case; while the expense of the mental and spiritual supply, the living ministry, ought to be the same for all alike. Nay, if anything, the more expensive article if we may so speak, the more highly educated and more able minister, is most needed just in those places, where the ignorance and poverty of the people make it impossible to obtain a fitting maintenance for him upon the Voluntary system. That system then, I contend, fails in the most essential point of all, the providing a sufficient and efficient ministry; and to omit the question of this provision, when comparing Voluntaryism with endowments, and to limit the test of their success only to the number of sittings supplied by each, is just about as rational as if, in a question of supplying Bath with gas, the contract were to be given to a company which undertook to furnish

us with a thousand lamps, only five hundred of which should be lighted, in preference to another company which proposed to give us a slightly less number of lamps, of superior manufacture, and every one of them lighted with gas.

Lastly, this arithmetical test is utterly deceptive, *because it entirely leaves out the consideration of the quality of the teaching given in the respective places of worship.* Heterodox and Orthodox, Deist and Unitarian, Wesleyan and Baptist, are lumped together to weigh against what even our adversaries admit to be the Orthodox Christianity of the Church of England.

What would be thought of the traveller who, in reporting the number of provision shops in Canton, were to reckon all the opium shops, or in London, all the gin palaces? And yet Christian Voluntaryists are not ashamed to reckon all the poison shops of the deadliest heresies among the purer teachings of orthodox dissent, as triumphs of the Voluntary system. Even Mr. Horace Mann declares that such a course "can be satisfactory to no one." It seems to be perfectly satisfactory to the Liberation Society.*

And now, what is the case of the Church on the whole of the question of the supply of means of religious instruction? Briefly stated, it is this. Of the three great means of religious instruction and edification in this country—viz., placing them in the order of their importance, Clergy, Schools, and Sittings—the Church of England supplies the two first in immensely the largest quantity, while of the third, she provides an equal quantity, but of a much superior quality.

But, let us suppose that the test selected by the Liberation Society were as sound as I have proved it to be unsound,

* It is said, in reply to this objection, that however heterodox many of these sects may be, yet that their existence proves the power of the Voluntary principle equally with that of the most orthodox. But this is to overlook the fact that the Voluntary system tends to the large and rapid increase of sects, tempting as it does the teacher to accommodate his doctrine to the prevailing errors of his flock, and directly encouraging the splitting off of each new form of opinion into a new and separate sect The immense increase of the number of sects in America, and the extravagant heresies of some of them, give striking proof of this. Competition in religion, as in everything else, leads to adulteration.

I say *that the inference they draw from it, of the total failure of the State Church principle, is egregiously false.*

For, in the first place, it appears that the Church, in 1801, supplied 80 per cent. of all the religious accommodation provided, while Dissent supplied only 20. Upon their own showing therefore, and judging by their own test of success, the Church-State principle at the beginning of this century had succeeded, and the Voluntary principle had totally failed.

But, at the end of the next fifty years, this proportion is reversed; and this, we are told, proves the failure of the Church and State principle. So it would, *if the State principle had been at work all that time.* But it has not; and our adversaries know that it has not. They boast of the fact that it did not work—that they would not allow it to work. "The logic of facts," "the opposition of dissenters," says Mr. Miall, have prevented it, and led to "the total abandonment of State aid." In fact, during those fifty years, the whole sum contributed by the State for Church extension in England has been a million and a half, against the seven and a half millions contributed by private liberality; while twenty or thirty millions would have been needed to meet the exigencies of the case. The fifty years then, selected by the Voluntaryists from which to prove that the State Church principle has totally failed to supply means of religious instruction, *are precisely those fifty years in which they themselves first impeded, and at last stopped, its working altogether.* Of all the instances of logical audacity on record none, certainly, can exceed this. Our enemies first carefully tie our hands, and then boast that we cannot fight. They deliberately and carefully take off the wheels of our chariots, and then taunt us because they drive heavily.

Suppose, that, on the occasion of the invention of the screw-propeller, the great paddle-wheel "interest" had obtained an act forbidding any increase in the size of the arms of the screw beyond their first dimensions; and that then, after the lapse of fifty years, they should publish a pamphlet to prove that the principle of screw propulsion had "totally failed to meet the exigencies" of our modern commerce. Or suppose that a parent, after supplying his son with clothes up to the age

of ten years, were suddenly to resolve to supply him no longer; at the end of a year or two the youth has quite outgrown his last suit; he is in rags: what is to be done? Most people would say, "Compel the unnatural parent to clothe his child." "No," say Mr. Miall and his friends, "you are altogether mistaken; you see in this child a proof that the system of parental supply has totally failed to provide the means of decent covering in timely abundance to meet the exigencies of the case. Henceforth, let the provision of little boys' clothes be left to the energies of the Voluntary system!"

Indeed it is curious to see how, in this pamphlet, the writer has contrived to select, as the test of the success or failure of the State Church principle, precisely that point in which it is absolutely impossible that it could fail if only allowed to work. He has chosen the test of quantity, and of quantity only. If he had chosen that of quality, he might have made out a more plausible case; he might have tried to show that State endowments tend to deteriorate the character of the clergy. But surely, if the question be only one of the amount of supply, it is clear that the State could, at any moment, by one enactment, provide sittings in ample and "timely abundance," to "meet all exigencies," however great.*

The truth is, that the whole of this pamphlet is an elaborate

* The following extract from "Voluntaryism in England and Wales," is interesting as a specimen of the reasoning powers of the Liberation society:—

"Now, if ever a theory were subjected to a fair and complete trial, theirs has been during the last fifty years. A pressing necessity for the very aid which the state Church ought to have supplied, and which according to that theory it alone could supply, was created by the extraordinary expansion of the population. The state Church did not meet it; the non-endowed religious denominations did—and that, not in stinted and inadequate measure, but—fully and everywhere! What other *experimentum crucis* can be required? There is only one form in which the experiment could be tried more decisively and conclusively—namely, by dis-connecting the Episcopal Church of England from the state, and withdrawing from it all national resources, in order to see if the Church, as a religious institution, would live or die. Will they make that experiment, or will they be content to remain in the awkward argumentative dilemma of abiding by a theory which has been disproved by every test except one, which they decline to apply?"

"If ever a theory were subjected to a fair and complete trial"—the fair trial being the actual refusal to allow that theory to be tried at all! "What other *experimentum crucis* can be required?" Only the experiment of trying what the state might do if not hindered by Voluntaryists in carrying out the State Church principle.

comparison—not between Voluntaryism and an Establishment—but between Voluntaryism in the Church and Voluntaryism outside it, since the year 1801.*

We should not greatly care if the result were, what it is not, in favour of Nonconforming Voluntaryism. It were only to be expected that at first the Church should have been slow to recognise the fact of her desertion by the State, and, for some time, unconscious of the immense additional burthen thrown upon her, of making all the spiritual provision needed for all those yearly-increasing millions of the population which Voluntaryism cannot, and the State will not, provide for. But the real question is, not whether Dissenting or Church Voluntaryism has done most in the last fifty years; but what have the joint efforts of Dissenting and Church Voluntaryism done to meet the exigencies of the case? How far have they together succeeded in bringing the Gospel to the doors of those five millions who on the Census Sunday worshipped nowhere? How far have they together penetrated,

* Not even between these, strictly and properly speaking.

Voluntaryism is not entitled to the credit of the free gifts made within the Church. By far the greater part of these were devoted not to the carrying out of the Voluntary but to the extension and support of the Parochial system. The Churches built by voluntary contributions have been mainly, either Parish Churches, properly so called, or District Churches, built under special Acts of Parliament, making them for all Ecclesiastical purposes parochial. They have very few of them been built upon the Voluntary system, in which the minister has only a *congregational* not a *parochial charge*. The territorial or Fixed Principle has been carried out in nearly all of them, to say nothing of the fact that these voluntary efforts have owed, in many cases, their existence, and in most their success, to the unsparing and laborious efforts of the parish clergyman. In how many places would there have been no new School, no District Church, no District Visitors, no Church Missionary or Pastoral Aid Association, if there had not been first a pastor placed there by the State, whose duty it was to set on foot all these good works?

The large sums raised by our Voluntary Associations have been strangely enough quoted against our Church as a proof of the failure of the Fixed Principle. They are the clearest proof of its success. They shew that an establishment not only does not repress, but that it best elicits and fosters the great Christian grace of charity. Those only who confound *Free Gifts* with the *Voluntary System* would think of alleging one of the brightest triumphs of our Establishment as a proof of its utter failure. If our clergy had neglected to urge their flock to voluntary effort, we should have been told that the State Church principle utterly fails in the great work of promoting Christian liberality. When they do urge it and succeed more largely than the ministers of any other denomination, they are told, this only proves that Voluntaryism is better than an Establishment.

by missionary incursion, into the masses of that heathen population which has grown up around the doors of Churches and of Chapels? What have they done to reach the densely crowded poor in the back streets and lanes of our great cities, where, within the sound of Chapel bells, and beneath the shadow of Church spires, are living and dying tens of thousands of Englishmen and women and children, who have never heard a sermon or joined in a prayer ?*

Is not the fact that such a heathen population has grown up around us a clear proof that something more is wanting than a supply of sittings, such as Voluntaryism boasts of having made; that there is needed a large increase of that which Voluntaryism never can supply, the living, active, aggressive, missionary ministry? The opinion of a Nonconformist will have more weight on this point than any argument of mine. The author of a pamphlet on "The Churches, the People, and the Pew System" (a Nonconformist), thus writes:—

"That the primary want is, of pastoral agencies, not of places of worship, is the unanimous testimony of all the witnesses. The districts now attached to most town Churches are far too large for pastoral visitation; for that frequent and friendly intercourse which is needed to give the people any real knowledge of their pastor and his interest in their welfare, and to bring them under his influence. And thus, through sheer ignorance, prejudice against religion and its ministers grows up unchecked and gathers strength day by day. The truth of this position is shewn by the remarkable effects produced in districts cut off from the original parishes, and assigned to energetic and judicious clergymen, exhibited in the modest statements extracted from some of them by the Lords' Committee. The fruits of this more extended action of the clergy have shewn themselves in a greatly increased attendance of the people upon religious ordinances, largely including the class at present most opposed to religious influences, the superior operative class; and in a disposition to contribute liberally, for their means, to the maintenance and extension of religious worship."—*Churches, People, and Pew System*, p. 10.

But it may be alleged in reply to this, that, if Voluntaryism fails to supply a regularly educated and settled ministry, at

* On this point the testimony of Mr. Horace Mann is of great importance, shewing as it does the utter failure of the Voluntary principle just where its efforts are most wanted, and, if we are to believe its advocates, have been most successful—IN THE LARGE TOWNS.

"It seems that out of the total number of 1,644,734 additional sittings reckoned to be necessary, 1,332,992 or 80 per cent. are required for the seventy-two boroughs, or rather for sixty of the most recent, the remainder, for reasons obvious when their names are seen, being fortunately blessed with more than adequate provision. This

least it supplies a less educated and less regular agency in its city missionaries and district visitors. On this point however, our Nonconformist authority thus speaks :—

"But, in reality, the number of ministers provided by these missions bears a very small proportion to the requirements of the population among which they are placed. And, deficient as they are in numbers, they are still more deficient in quality, and are for the most part quite unequal to the work of reviving an interest in religion among the masses ; with abundance of zeal, they are too generally ignorant and narrow-minded, wanting in tact and christian charity required in dealing with shrewd, keen-witted, often sceptical men, and for the understanding and removal of their difficulties ; and they are constantly giving offence by their ill-timed and misdirected attacks upon the prejudices of the persons they visit.

"Until the masses of the working classes outside our Churches are approached in a totally different way from the present mode of cheap apostleship, and till they are welcomed into all our Churches, when they do enter them, in a frank and cordial spirit, indicative of satisfaction in meeting them where we may ignore those differences of condition which are unavoidable in the routine of daily life, but which we profess to believe are as nothing in the sight of Him in whose presence we and they stand, our piping will be as to those who dance not, and our mourning as to those who lament not.

"Our clergy of all sects must themselves go forth to meet the outside population in their own homes, and upon ground to which they will come; *and not, as our dissenting clergy mostly do, relegate the duty to an inferior order of ministers.*"—*Churches, People, and Pew System*, pp. 15, 16.

So far then from proving the failure of the State Church principle, the history of the last fifty years proves exactly the reverse. It proves, that precisely during the period when that principle was abandoned, and the provision of ministers left to the Voluntary system, that provision has failed, utterly failed, "to meet the exigencies of the case." The people have lapsed in large masses into Heathenism, because Voluntaryism could not give them christian pastors in "timely abundance."

Would their condition have been better, if in 1801, the State had done, what we are told it should do in 1851, destroyed the parochial system, divested the Church of England

gives a vivid picture of the destitute condition of our great-town population, and speaks loudly of the need there is for new and energetic plans of operation having special reference to towns. The absence of that local interest which leads to individual benevolence, and the evident inadequacy of all that can be reasonably expected from the great employers of industry, appear to call for the combined exertions either of the whole inhabitants of a particular neighbourhood, or of the Church at large, as the only other method for relieving such deplorable deficiency."

Clergy of their territorial charges, and left them ministers only of the congregations worshipping in their Churches, and deprived them of those endowments from which so large a staff of missionary curates are now supported? Or would not their condition have been very different if, in 1801, the state had recognised its duty of providing for its poor the means of religious instruction, by extending and improving the then existing parochial provision, "in timely abundance to meet the exigencies of the case?"

We think it would: our opponents have got to show that it would not. But, until they do, they must allow us to insist that the facts of the case, upon their own shewing, all go to prove that the Voluntary principle has utterly failed to do the Missionary work of the Church.

II. But, if Voluntaryism has proved itself unequal to the MISSIONARY work, has it succeeded better in the PASTORAL work of the Church?

The two kinds of work are widely different. To seek out and bring within the fold "Christ's sheep scattered throughout this naughty world" is the task of the Missionary; to guard and feed the flock so gathered is the duty of the pastor. The Missionary is commanded to go out into the high ways and bye-ways, and compel men to come in to the marriage supper. The pastor is charged to wait upon and minister to the assembled guests. The missionary plants; the pastor waters, watches, trains, and prunes the trees within the vineyard. It is clear that for such "diversities of administration" there is needed a corresponding diversity of gifts. The most effective missionary does not always make the best pastor; and again the most successful pastor does not always prove the most successful missionary.

Now one great defect of the modern Voluntary system is, *that it is decidedly unfavourable to the growth of the pastoral character.* It tends always to produce preachers rather than pastors. The minister who is to live by the Voluntary system must be a popular preacher, a man who can "draw," one who can keep up and extend the "interest" of the body he belongs to.

The most able and efficient pastor, the man with the highest administrative gifts and the greatest aptitude for teaching, would have but little chance of obtaining the suffrages of a congregation against such attractions as these. That such is the tendency of the Voluntary system appears from the testimony of its supporters. In the life of a dissenting minister, a Mr. Pritchard, written in the year 1836, I find the following statement:—

"Our ministry, speaking of the Independent denomination, has perhaps as general efficiency as any. It does not, however, provide the same encouragement to talent as some. A particular kind, the ready fluency, the variegated aptitude of address, is in constant requisition. *As useful, though not such shining abilities are too commonly slighted.* Because his was not the popular, the captivating art, I know that a few regarded him as really a secondary man. Might not a larger share of capability be drawn towards us? at least, might it not be unrepelled?"

Again, the "Englishwoman in America," a most favourable witness for Voluntaryism, tells us that "Love of display is evidenced by the desire in some of the congregations, to vie with each other in eloquence of their ministers, *and rhetoric will occasionally command a higher salary than more useful qualifications.*"—*Religious Aspect of America*, p. 181.

Thus it appears that the tendency of this system is to substitute the popular "rhetoric" of the preacher for the humbler but more useful gifts of the pastor. But, if it tends to supersede the pastor, still more directly does it tend to deteriorate the preacher. It gives rise to a miserable and degrading system of pulpit puffing, such as we see only too many signs of in the present day. Sermons on every occasion, and on every possible subject, advertised with clap-trap titles and ingeniously startling mottoes, as drapers announce their wares when they make an "alarming sacrifice,"—the Star system transferred from the Theatre to the Church,—the Pulpit turned into the Rev. Mr. So-and-so's advertising van.*

But, secondly, *the Voluntary system places the pastor in a false relation to his flock.* One of the duties of the pastor

* In the above remarks I do not refer to dissenting preachers exclusively. We have enough, and more than enough, of this wretched touting for congregations among ourselves. It will be found wherever the voluntary system is found whether within or without our Church.

—one of his highest, and most important and most difficult duties—is "boldly to rebuke vice." Is it wise to make him whose office it is to rebuke vice, dependent for his daily bread upon the alms of the vicious? Does it help to the courageous and faithful discharge of the office of a censor—difficult and delicate enough at all times—to know that the offender to be corrected has it in his power to sentence his judge, in turn, to poverty or starvation? On such a system as this it is to be feared that,

> "The *pulpit's* laws the *pulpit's* patrons give,
> And those who live to *preach*, must *preach* to live."

That such is frequently the result of Voluntaryism, we learn from a dissenting minister whose name is had in honour alike by Churchman and Dissenter, of whom, when living, many a Churchman used to say, *Cum talis sis utinam noster esses*; and of whom, now that he is dead, there is not a Churchman in England who would not say, "May my soul be with the soul of John Angell James!" He tells us:—

"In many of our churches the pastor is placed far below his level; he may flatter like a sycophant, beg like a servant, or woo like a lover; he is not permitted to enjoin like a ruler. His opinion is received with no deference; his person is treated with no respect; and, in presence of some of his lay tyrants, he is only permitted to peep and mutter in the dust."

Is this the tone in which the prophet of God's violated law should speak its thunders to the guilty? or will such gentle mutterings as these make hardened sinners tremble as they hear? Alas, "it is Paul who now trembles before his hearers—not the hearers who tremble before Paul!"

But it is objected here, that, if the Voluntary system tends to make the minister timid and time-serving because it makes him dependent, the Endowed system on the other hand tends to make him careless and lazy, by making him independent. No doubt it does. The dangers of an endowment lie in this direction, though Mr. James does tell us of "lazy and loitering ministers" among the Voluntaryists. But the question is not, under which system ungodly and careless men

will work best, but, under which system a really good and faithful man would have most facility for working. I grant that the Establishment has its worldly and careless Rectors and Vicars, as Voluntaryism has its timid and time-serving ministers. On the other hand, if it be alleged that a truly Christian man will rise superior to the temptations of dependence, equally will a truly Christian man rise superior to the temptations of independence.

Supposing, then, the minister, in either case, to be equally conscientious and equally spiritual, in which will he be best placed for the performance of a most important pastoral function? Is it not clear that the endowed and independent clergyman of a parish is placed in a position of tenfold greater power for the authoritative rebuke of all the sinners in his parish, than that occupied by the unendowed and dependent minister of a congregation?

But, thirdly, *Voluntaryism fails to make adequate provision for the support of the ministry.* The poverty of some of our clergy is a fertile topic of reproach on the part of Voluntaryists against our Church. They are never weary of sympathizing with the wrongs of our "ill-paid and half-starved working clergy," or of denouncing the system which can leave such men in such destitution, while it lavishes its wealth upon a few "bloated pluralists." Whether our "ill-paid" clergy will thank these friends of theirs for proposing to improve their condition by "secularising" those endowments from which their "scanty pittances" are derived, or whether the country generally will think, that the confiscation of Church property is a better remedy for the poverty of the clergy, than increased endowments, or such a redistribution of Church funds as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are now effecting, are questions which may or may not have occurred to these gentlemen. But one question which it ought to have occurred to them they would be expected to answer, is, How does your Voluntary system work in this respect? Does it provide a decent maintenance for eachpastor? Has it no "ill-paid" half-starved, ministers?

None whatever, if we are to believe Mr. Miall's descrip-

tion of the Voluntary principle. "Never," he assures us, "does the Church consent to lose all, that she does not speedily gain all." Nay, it is "only when she is poor, when she can point to her self-devotion and her trust, that she has power to operate as by a spell upon the springs of liberality. Riches rush in upon her in proportion as she is empty. All the feelings which prompt to cheerful giving—ay, and to giving with a profuse munificence—are most susceptible when the Church is most in need, and is least anxious to supply it."—*Voluntary and Fixed Principles, pp.* 21, 22.

What a delightful picture of the blessings of Voluntaryism! Here are no such painful inequalities of income as exist in our Establishment. "A profuse munificence" provides, only perhaps a little too sumptuously, for the wants of all. The "willing ministrations" of attached flocks are ever furnishing an abundant "supply of temporal things to their pastors, in grateful recompense for their spiritual things." It needs but to be known that a pastor is poor and pious, and immediately this "spell" produces an overflowing of "the springs of liberality." Indeed the only fault of this system would seem to be that it tends to defeat its own object. The world may, Mr. Miall tells us, "speedily place at the feet of the Church more of its temporal possessions than she has the grace to employ wisely." The "bloated wealth" of Voluntaryism may then, it is to be feared, ere long need the assistance of the Liberation Society to reduce it again to apostolic poverty; which however must unhappily, in its turn, again produce an overflow of too "munificent" wealth.

Alas, for the difference between abstract principles and "known, tangible, and realized" results! Mr. Angell James thus describes the condition of the real pastor under the Voluntary system—a sad contrast to Mr. Miall's ideal.

"Uneasiness has often arisen between a minister and people, by *the unwillingness of the latter to raise the necessary support for their pastor.* They have seen him struggling with the cares of an increasing family, and marked the cloud of gloom as it thickened and settled upon his brow; they knew his wants; and yet, though able to double his salary and dissipate every anxious thought, they have refused to advance his stipend, and have robbed him of his comfort, either to gratify their avarice, or

indulge their sensuality. He remonstrates, *they* are offended: love departs, esteem is diminished, confidence is destroyed; while ill-will, strife, and alienation, grow apace."

Perhaps, however, the reason why the poor minister's supply was stinted in these cases has been that "cloud of gloom which thickened upon his brow." It is when the Church is most in need, but at the same time "least anxious for supply," that we are told it flows in largely. The unhappy pastor "was anxious," too anxious to have any right to hope that the Voluntary principle should supply his needs. Could we only find a race of pastors who could struggle without anxiety and starve with gaiety, the "principle" would work perfectly.

The "grateful" people of Mr. Miall's Utopia are further described by Mr. James as "loving their minister dearly with their lips, but hating him cordially with their pockets." "They treat him like wild beasts, who are kept humble by being kept poor." "They pray for a blessing upon his basket and his store, while they take care that his basket shall be empty, and his store nothingness itself."

So much for Voluntaryism as it is, when compared with Voluntaryism as it ought to be. The contrast reminds one of the saying of Charles V., who, on being shewn in some one of his Spanish towns a petty rivulet spanned by a magnificent bridge, is reported to have advised the municipality either to "sell the bridge or to buy water." The splendid arch of Mr. Miall's imagination crosses such a little trickling stream of fact, that it might be as well if he increased the latter before so boastfully pointing to the former.

But we are told, that after all, the poverty of ministers has its advantages. It guarantees the sincerity of their motives in entering the ministry, and it secures their spirituality after they have entered it.

Never was there a greater mistake than this. You do not gain more spiritual men by lowering the inducements to enter the ministry; you only obtain your supply of ministers from a lower class of men. There are men to whom fifty or a hundred pounds a year is relatively as great wealth, and as great a temptation to take orders for the sake of gaining it,

as five hundred a year would be to others. Cut down the incomes of the clergy to the lowest point; and you will still have unspiritual and worldly men ready enough to accept them. The only difference will be that you will have ignorant and ill bred, instead of educated and well bred worldliness. I remember being told by an eminent and pious Irish prelate, that he had once been in the habit of ordaining "literates," thinking that their piety ought to outweigh the defects of their education, but that he had latterly given up this practice, as he found the men so ordained were for the most part inferior to the other clergy, not merely in education, but in piety; thus proving that piety and poverty are not so necessarily connected as some people think.

But, if scanty means are so highly favorable to deep spirituality, let us hope that the lay members of the Liberation society will be as eager to secure this advantage for themselves, as they are to confer it upon us. If a clergyman is the better, morally and spiritually, for being poor, equally so is a layman. "My kingdom is not of this world," and "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," were not spoken for clergy only. Why should not the gain of a compulsory mortification be conferred upon the christian laity, as well as upon the christian clergy? The voluntary surrender of their own wealth by the Liberationists would have a very striking effect, and would set a noble example to the clergy whose spirituality they are so anxious to promote. At least it would have this advantage, that people would give these gentlemen credit for meaning what they say, in all this unctuous talk about spirituality and poverty, which is simply nauseous on the lips of a comfortable and luxurious apostle of modern voluntaryism.

But, after all, what a meanly cruel argument is this, that the ministry must be kept poor to preserve their spirituality; that wealthy laymen are to profit by the piety which their minister learns in the bitter school of poverty; that their spiritual life is to be enriched by the struggles and anxieties, the blighted hopes and overtasked energies, the weary life and early death of their poor pastor. Such men would fain treat their ministers as we are told the Brazilian ladies treat the

fire-flies, which they impale upon pins, and fasten to their dresses, that the struggles and flutterings of the dying insect may give out sparks of light for their adornment. This odious argument reminds me of an anecdote I once heard from a worthy and pious nonconformist, of a poor minister, who went to his deacon to solicit an increase of salary. "Salary!" said the deacon, "salary! why, I thought you worked for souls." "And so I do," replied the poor minister, "but I cannot eat souls; and, if I could, it would take a good many souls of the size of yours to make a dish." It would be an evil day for the Church when the support of our clergy should depend upon the liberality of such small-souled men! There are plenty of them within the Church, as well as out of it. Church nature differs nothing from dissenting nature. Let us hope we shall never see it similarly tried.

Voluntaryism also *fails to make provision for the pastor in his old age.* So long as bodily and mental vigour remain unimpaired, the pew-rent system may afford to the man of great abilities a comfortable, to the man of ordinary abilities a decent, maintenance. But what is to become of the minister when ill-health or advancing years have impaired or destroyed those powers by which he earned his daily bread? It would be a mockery to talk, in his case, of his "being supported by nothing beyond the contributions of the attendants." Attendants at his chapel are falling off year after year. A scanty few, who knew and loved him in his better days, remain faithful to the last; but the fickle public, trained upon the Voluntary system to a fastidious and exacting criticism, accustomed to insist upon the full value of their seat-rents, in able and eloquent sermons, soon go elsewhere; and the aged minister is left to poverty and to neglect. His income, unlike that of any other professional man, never increased in due proportion to his reputation and his talents, so as to allow of his laying by a sufficiency for his declining years. What is to become of him? His now small and daily lessening congregation cannot support him and his family, even if he could bring himself to live a pen-

sioner upon their alms. An endowment fund for superannuated ministers may give him a scanty stipend which might suffice to keep him from actual want—though even this is a direct violation of the voluntary principle; it is "a fixed, permanent, settled" provision, such as proves an utter "want of faith" in those who make, or those who avail themselves of it;—but even this is not always available. What, I ask again, is to become of the superannuated minister upon the voluntary system?

This is no imaginary difficulty. It is one already felt—seriously and increasingly felt—within our own church. There are, at this moment, many district churches and chapels built mainly upon the pew system, with, perhaps, a very scanty endowment, where the Incumbent who, on his first appointment in the full vigour of manhood, "filled" the church without difficulty, is becoming gradually less and less equal to the task as he advances in years. What is to be done in such cases, is a question which is beginning to be very anxiously asked by all who care, not only for the comfort of the pastor, but for the edification of the flock. *

And now, that we have considered those points on which something can be said upon both sides of the question, let us note those on which all the advantage is clearly and entirely upon the side of the Fixed Principle.

In the first place, then, *it gives with territorial privilege, territorial responsibility.* The clergyman of the National

* In one case which occurred recently, a truly excellent and devoted minister who in his best days had been promised by the trustees of his Church £400 a year, had become from old age nearly inaudible, and his congregation were dwindling rapidly away. The pew rents ceased to produce the stipulated sum, and the trustees—in this case fortunately wealthy and liberal men—made good the deficiency out of their own pockets, until death released their good old pastor from his painful dependance, and them from their payments. Yet in our Church this difficulty is much less severely felt than it must be in others—our benefices relieving, in a great measure, the pressure upon the Voluntary system—directly, by the promotion to them of district incumbents, or chapel ministers; and indirectly, by leaving a comparatively small number of clergymen dependent upon the Voluntary system. But as the number of livings remains fixed, while the number of unendowed or partially endowed district churches, increases steadily every year, the evil here described is a growing and a serious one, and one that can only be met by large endowments, public or private. How it is met in other churches I do not know, and should be glad to learn.

Church is not the minister of a congregation with no cure of souls beyond it. He is the pastor of a parish, responsible to God and man for all the souls within the district over which he has been placed. He is bound to do his utmost to bring the gospel, not only to those who may worship in his church, but to every one of his parishioners. He must not, he does not, regard himself as free to select the more pious or more promising of the inhabitants to whom to minister, or to gather out a little flock of godly people amongst whom, and whom alone, to labour. He is the minister of all, and of all alike. The whole is his field and he must, so far as he can, cultivate it all.

Not so with the pastor upon the Voluntary system.

"Dissenting ministers," says the Nonconformist layman already quoted, "recognize no care of souls beyond their own congregations, which contain even a smaller proportion of the working classes than the Churches of the Establishment. In fact, the regular pastoral visitation of their own people is, in our large towns, the exception and not the rule. *So that the bulk of the working classes, with the exception of the Roman Catholics, are thrown for pastoral visitation, succour, and consolation, upon the Church of England, which does, at least, recognize, and attempt to discharge, this function.* That the Dissenting Churches should have thus neglected their duty to carry the gospel to the masses around them, and at the same time, have resisted the increase of the national provision for this purpose, argues a deplorable blindness to their duties as Christian Churches. They have forgotten that their position involves its duties as well as its rights; that their claim for exemption from a share in the provision, through a national Church for the religious wants of the people, could only rest upon the proof that they were independently taking their own share in ministering to those wants. The blame must be divided between ministers and people. The laity ought not to have needed to be reminded of this duty; and their clergy ought to have kept this duty steadily before their flocks."—*The Churches, the People, and the Pew System*, p. 11.

The reason which he gives for this failure in the pastoral work of Voluntaryism, is very remarkable :—

"Too much time," he tells us, "is spent by our ministers on other than strictly ministerial work. We are too exacting in our demands upon our ministers for elaborate pulpit discourses, which, however excellent in themselves as compositions, do really pretty completely exemplify "the foolishness of preaching" in the extent of their practical influence on respectable steady-going congregations. By the demands thus made upon the time of our ministers, we go far to cut them off from the characteristic work of the Christian ministry, carrying the gospel to the poor and needy. And we also cut them off from, perhaps, the most fruitful source, humanly speaking, of religious inspiration, by hindering them from extensive intercourse

with the poor, their trials, their burthens, their sufferings. I would not be understood to ignore the fact, that there are ministers of unusual vigour of body and mind who do contrive to combine, with a pretty complete fulfilment of the demands of their congregations, much active labour among those who have still greater need of their services. But such cases are too rare to affect the truth of the general statement."—*The Churches, People, and Pew System*, p. 13.

Further, the pastor on the parochial system *is free from all suspicion of interested motives in the minds of those among whom he labours.* It is but too well known how jealously suspicious the ignorant poor are of those who come among them as the representatives of the wealthier and better classes of society. So little used are they, poor creatures, to disinterested kindness, that it is hard to persuade them that our benevolent efforts for their good do not conceal some great benefit to ourselves.

It is no small help, therefore, to the pastor when he can say to the poor man, "Come to my church; you know it does not make a penny difference to me whether you come or stay away; it is for your own sake I ask you." And it is no small hindrance to the congregational minister that, when giving the same invitation, his ignorant hearer may accuse him of wishing to swell his congregation, or increase his pew-rents. An endowment gives practical and tangible force to the assurance, "We seek not yours, but you."

In the third place, an endowment *frees the pastor from the waste of time, the annoyance, the weariness of begging.* The Voluntary system cannot be kept up without enormous and incessant begging. The world has not yet begun to "pour its treasures" at the feet of the Church with that "profuse munificence" which anticipates and prevents entreaty. The world must be begged from, humbly, perseveringly, eloquently, beseechingly, before it consents to give; and, accordingly, our religious societies have, of late days, studied with great care the science of solicitation. Religious mendicity has become an important art, with its fixed rules, and skilled labourers. The "getting up" of a society or of a meeting; the selection of "good names" for the committee or the list of speakers; the

advertising, the "urgent appealing," by active and importunate secretaries—are all brought to the highest perfection, and, all together, absorb no small proportion of the contributions of the charitable; and no small share of the time of the ministry, which can so ill be spared from higher duties.

The Rev. Dr. Miller, of Birmingham, than whom no man in England knows better what the pressure upon a popular speaker and preacher is, and than whom no man in England could hope to be more successful in collecting money in his own locality, where his personal influence is so deservedly great, in his evidence before the Committee on Church Rates, tells us how the begging system works in Birmingham:—

Chairman—"You consider that if the voluntary principle were adopted generally in the parishes, it would be necessary for the clergyman to make appeals to the parish in order to raise the money?—A. I am quite sure of it; I do not speak from theory; we do that in Birmingham now; there is not a Birmingham clergyman at present, who if he wants to do anything which is at all out of the way, does not sit down and write appeals; and I could count off upon the ends of my fingers the first ten persons that every clergyman would write to as a matter of course; we should begin with Lord Calthorpe, and go on with the same list of persons, every one of us.

Q. "Is not it the case at present, that whether for the building of churches or the erection of schools, the clergymen are obliged to make very widely extended appeals, not only to their own people, but to persons very foreign to their parishes?—A. The truth is that begging is now a chief element in our duties.

Q. "Then if the provision of the funds necessary for repairing the churches were thrown upon the voluntary system, would it not oblige the clergyman to extend his operations very largely?—A. He would have to extend them; and, as a result of my own observations of Birmingham, I should say that he would extend them unsuccessfully, and that the churches would go to decay.

Q. "*Would it not very seriously interfere with the time which he ought to give to his parochial duties?*—A. *It does now most seriously.*

Q. "*Would it not add very largely to his anxieties?*—A. *It does now, most heavily.*

Q. "*And in those ways very seriously prejudice his spiritual work?*—A. *We all feel in Birmingham that we are becoming secularised more and more every day;* we get on by constant begging!

Q. "Do you not suppose that it would lead to very largely increased exertions on the part of the clergy, to obtain the subscriptions which would be necessary for the support of their churches?—A. I think it would, and I should be very sorry to put that upon the clergy; I think that they do as much as they can now in raising money for a great number of other objects, and I should be very sorry to impose upon them the necessity of going round, cap in hand, to raise money for the repair of the church.

Q. "It would seriously interfere with their pastoral and parochial duties generally?—A. I think so." *

Lastly, *an Endowment gives us a learned ministry.* On this head there will be little dispute. On the score of learning, our Church may fairly challenge the Christian world, nay, the history of Christian literature itself. What church has ever produced such a body of divinity as the Church of England? What fruit of this kind has the Voluntary System produced in America? Dwight (who fought for Establishments), President Edwards, Channing, Albert Barnes, Moses Stuart, and Cheever, are all the names of note which American theological literature has given to the world. Compare this with the list of names of English divines, well worthy of that name, that our church can furnish for the last twenty years, and ask, does Voluntaryism or an Endowment best promote the study of divinity, and the production of high class theological writings? The fact is, Voluntaryism uses up all its able men in preaching, setting them to "supply" congregations and speak for societies, at an age when a youth in our English universities is just beginning to learn to think, and keeping them employed at this work alone until old age disables them. For learning there must be leisure; for leisure there must be at least competence. The minister on the Voluntary system can but rarely hope to enjoy much of either.

But these are the advantages of the Establishment as regards the pastor; there are others as regards the people.

The Church Establishment is of inestimable value, as a national testimony to the value of religion throughout the length and breadth of the land. The poorest and most ignorant of our people, whose eye, as he rises to his morning work, or as he returns from his labour, rests upon the tall spire of the parish church, or the parsonage

* Whoever wishes to see a most amusing but most instructive illustration of the miseries and failures of clerical begging will find one in the account of the attempt to raise a voluntary subscription for the repair of Lachford church, in "Twenty Years in the Church." The author permits me to state that only the names in this account are fictitious; the facts really occurred as they are narrated.

where dwells *his* minister, or meets that minister in some of his rounds of daily visitation, and who knows that all these are provided by the State for *his* improvement, learns this great lesson, that this Christian nation regards the souls of her people as of infinite preciousness—learns that there is something of more importance in the eyes of his rulers than commerce, or art, or manufacture—learns, and teaches to his children, the great truth thus daily pressed upon his own conviction, that "righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a disgrace to any people."

Is it a slight advantage, moreover, which the Establishment bestows upon the poor man, in that it gives him a right to come to the parish church for worship, and to the parish clergyman for instruction and for counsel? There is not a parishioner in any parish in England, be he high or low, rich or poor, who has not a right, as a citizen of England, to command the services of the minister of the National Church—to summon him to his bed-side at any hour of the day or of the night to give him the ordinances of religion, to console and strengthen him in his sorrow or his suffering. The poor man has the same right to the services of the parish clergyman, that he has to those of the parish doctor, and for the same reason—both are officers of the State, appointed to minister to him gratuitously.

How large a share, too, of the endowments of our "bloated parsons," find their way to the homes where poor men dwell, in alms and charities that prepare the hearts of the grateful recipients to listen all the more willingly to the "good news" from the lips of the giver. And if we are told that this is bribing the poor to hear the Gospel, we can only say that it is such bribery as He practised who, wherever He went preaching the word of His kingdom, went also "doing good, and healing all manner of diseases, insomuch that great multitudes were gathered to him out of every city."

Lastly, the parochial principle has this great advantage, that it brings the parochial minister, on all the most important occasions of the poor man's life, into necessary and official relationship with him. At marriages, and burials,

and christenings, and on all those other occasions when the offices of the parish clergyman are required, there is a certainty that the poor will, if at no other times, be brought into contact with the minister of religion, and that, too, under circumstances the most favourable for speaking a word in season.

For all these reasons then, both as regards the pastor and the people, we hold that the territorial, fixed, parochial system of the English National Church is, of all others, the best calculated to produce a learned, efficient, independent, influential, and pious pastorate, and to promote and maintain the purity and power of religion in this country.

Abuses it may have, not a few; defects in its working, arising from the imperfections and infirmities of those who work it, it must have, many and great. But, despite all these abuses and all these defects, it is the noblest and the wisest system of national "religious instruction and edification" that the wisdom and piety of a nation ever devised. Let us hope that the English people will wait before they destroy it, until its assailants produce any system calculated to work at least half so well.

But, with all these great advantages, our Establishment is afflicted with two great evils which more than counterbalance all this good. Well, what are these great preponderating evils?—They are "State patronage" and "State control." No Voluntary speech or pamphlet is complete without these two sentences. They come in at the end of every paragraph, like the *refrain* after each verse of a ballad. They are as familiar to every listener at a Liberation Society meeting as the "unaccustomed to public speaking," or "enlightened and intelligent audience," or the vote of thanks to "our excellent chairman;" and never fail to bring their due rounds of cheers and loud applause. They may be disposed of very briefly. No one denies that State patronage and State control have their attendant evils and abuses, though these are absurdly exaggerated. But so has every kind of patronage and control. Patronage and control there must be somewhere. The appointment to office, and the

government of the Church, must be vested in some person or persons; and, in whomsoever they are vested, they will have their necessarily accompanying evils.

When you come to deal with patronage, which means money; when you come to deal with control, which means power, you come to deal with the infirmities of our common nature; and, place them where you will, there is a tendency to their abuse. Without going into all the points of detail, and without exposing all the extraordinary misconceptions of those who really believe that the Church is the offspring of the State, that the State has composed our Liturgy and Articles, and ordains our bishops and clergy—passing by these misrepresentations, I say, whatever evils can be named as arising from State patronage and State control, parallel if not greater evils can be adduced, arising from popular patronage and from popular control. If you have Court intrigue on the one hand, you have popular canvass on the other. If you have ministerial interest on the one hand, you have private jobbing on the other. If you have sycophancy to dukes on the one hand, you have sycophancy to deacons on the other. If you have improper selections by Prime Ministers on the one hand, you frequently have improper elections by majorities of congregations on the other. "Secret canvassing,"—"cabals, intrigues,"—"the most disgusting exercise of the most disgusting tyranny,"—"fires of contentions,"—"the greatest disorder and confusion,"—"peculiar and dishonourable fickleness of disposition on the part of churches who soon grow tired of the man they choose,"—"affairs of religious societies in chancery"—"strife, ill-will, confusion, and every evil work,"—tyrannical deacons "who are patrons of the living, bibles of the minister, and wolves of the flock,"—"hasty choice of unsuitable ministers," "injudicious congregations inviting ignorant and incompetent pastors,"—"relaxation of discipline,"—"many churches exhibiting the sad spectacle of a house divided against itself," —"schisms at the time of choosing a minister,"—"church meetings exhibiting scenes of confusion, little recommendatory of the democratic form of church government,"—"dis-

traction and division;"—these are some of the results of popular patronage, enumerated by one dissenting minister alone, Mr. Angell James. Is this state of things so very free from the evils alleged against State patronage in our Establishment as to make it seriously worth our while to try the experiment of making an exchange?

It is no pleasure to a churchman to point out these defects in dissenting communities. There are, we all know, faults and sins enough on both sides whenever poor human nature has to deal with money or money's worth. But when the advocates of Voluntaryism, carefully concealing all the evils of their system, are loud in their exposure of those existing in ours, and clamour on the ground of these for the instant abolition of the Establishment as "a blunder and a sin," Churchmen have no alternative but to expose the blunders and the sins of the system so boastingly offered as a substitute.

But we are told that it is not fair to select our instances of the working of Voluntaryism in this country, where it is cramped and hindered by the presence of the Establishment; we should "look to America," where Voluntaryism has free scope, and see what great things it has done there. The truth is that, so far from Voluntaryism being hindered, it is greatly helped, in this country, by the Establishment. It is no small aid to the Voluntary minister, that there is a National Church which does all the rough work of the ministry for him—which is bound to baptise, marry, and bury the whole population, to take charge of all the poor and outcast whom he does not and cannot look after—to help to keep up that general respect for religion and that desire for its ordinances among the middle classes, by which he so largely profits—to maintain a high and uniform standard of orthodoxy in its creeds and articles, by which, in no small degree, the teaching of all other orthodox churches is elevated and kept pure—to prevent, in a measure, that rapid increase of heterogeneous and heretical sects which spring up in the absence of a National Establishment. In all these ways we believe that pious and orthodox nonconformity

is greatly benefitted by the presence of an Established Church.

But we will suppose that this is altogether a mistake on our part; and, admitting that Voluntaryism does not get fair play in this country, we will "look to America," where Voluntaryism, unchilled by the cold shade of our Establishment, has had ample field, and room enough to display all its powers. Here, all will admit, is a real *experimentum crucis*. Here the Americans have done exactly what the English are asked to do. They have abolished their Establishments; they have freed religion from State patronage and State control, and left the "supply of religious instruction and edification" to the unfettered energies of the Voluntary system. Now for the results.

The Voluntary System in America.

It would be ungenerous perhaps to allude to the first efforts of this great principle. It takes some time for a people to change their ways, and some years must be allowed for the recovery of American religion from the numbing influences of its early establishment by the pilgrim fathers. We will only, therefore, refer, in passing, to the case of America in 1827, as displayed in "Essays on the Church." We will begin with Voluntaryism in 1839, some twenty years ago. At that date, *The Secession Magazine* tells us,

"The Protestant Episcopacy have considerably more than a third of their churches unsupplied with ministers; the Lutherans have five-sixths vacant; the Universalists, one-half; the Christian Society, three-fourths; the Presbyterian Church, a fifth; the Congregationalists, more than a third; the Free-will Baptists, a fourth; the Associate Presbyterians, one-half; the Dutch Reformed, nearly two-thirds; the Cumberland Presbyterians, one third; the Seventh Day Baptists, a fourth. Comparing these vacancies with the estimated population belonging to each sect, we shall find that among the Calvinistic Baptists there must be about 920,000 persons destitute of the ministration of gospel ordinances; and among the other Baptists the proportion is much the same. By the same mode of calculation the Presbyterian Church has a population of 360,000, whom it cannot supply with means of grace, though this Church be, perhaps, the most flourishing of all!"—*Secession Magazine, as quoted in a Speech by Lord Sandon, at Freemasons' Hall, London*, 1839.

Voluntaryism does not seem to have succeeded so far "in

supplying means of religious instruction and edification in timely abundance" in America.

But let us "look at America" sixteen years later, in the year 1855. And here we shall cite a witness who will not be accused of any prejudice for Establishments. "The Englishwoman in America" has lately published a little sequel to that work, entitled "The Religious Aspect in America;" a work written with the obvious design of advocating Voluntaryism.

Nothing can be more charming than the picture this writer draws of religion in America. There "complete religious toleration exists."* "Truth stands upon its own immutable vantage ground, and the civil power is unable to interfere with rights of conscience and religious worship." There is "an energetic and active state of Christianity, to which we have nothing comparable." "The poor are more systematically and universally sought out than under the parochial system in our English cities!" "There is a church for every 656 persons in the population." "There is no person in any of the settled districts who cannot have, if he desires it, the privilege of religious worship!"

The truth of these statements has yet to be tested. I cite them as proving the partiality of the writer for voluntaryism.

Now let us take, from the testimony of this partial witness, the following FACTS:—

In a chapter, "mainly devoted to a statistical account of the various churches," we find the following summary of the Evangelical Denominations in the United States:—

"They have a total of 42,359 churches, 29,430 ministers, 14,068 licentiates, 4,176,431 members, and a population of 17,762,000, *under their influence.*"

Now here are certainly some very startling facts.—In the first place we find that to 42,359 Churches there are only 29,430 ministers; that is, there are no less than 12,829 Churches without any settled pastoral ministry! Next, if

* Excepting, of course, when a minister is tarred and feathered, or shot dead for preaching against slavery.

we compare the number of those who are not only members of these Churches, but "*under their influence*"—a sufficiently vague phrase it will be admitted—we get the following result:—

The population of the United States in 1855, calculating from the census of 1850, cannot have been less than twenty seven millions; it was probably more. Taking it at this amount and deducting from it the 17,762,000, who are under the influence of Evangelical teaching, we find that there are no less than 9,238,000, *or more than one third of the whole population not even under the influence of pure christianity*, and not more, be it remembered, than 4,176,431, or *much less than one-sixth of the whole, who are members of pure christian Churches.*

But, we are told in the next chapter, that the non-Evangelical—or as we would call them Heterodox bodies, Romanists, Unitarians, Universalists, Mormonites, &c., number 4,117,000, of whom 3,250,000, are Roman Catholics. Now, if we add these to the number of Evangelical or Orthodox christians given above, we get the whole number of those who make any profession of any religion whatsoever in the United States—and it amounts to, 21,879,000, leaving no less than 5,121,000 persons who make no profession of religion whatever, who are open and avowed infidels! But of these non-Evangelical sects, there are some whom the most extended charity could not regard as otherwise than pure and unmixed evils, Mormonism for instance, which number 50,000; Spiritualism, which our authoress describes "as either the worst of modern extravagancies, or the worst of modern heresies"—"the greatest disgrace of new England, bringing a slur upon the influence of religion,"—"ever adding to its monstrosities and the number of its adherents," and "holding in terrible moral captivity 650,000 persons;" Universalism, "which exercises no reforming influence, and is chiefly agreeable to the irreligious and immoral, and all haters of Evangelical religion, and which numbers 500,000. Adding these and some similar sects together, and deducting them from the total of non-evangelical worshippers, we find a total of persons whom *we* could not call Christians, of at least 6,000,000.

x Why is a Romanist, who holds the Catholic Faith Heterodox and a Baptist, who does

Summing up all these results, we find that in the United States, in the year 1855, out of a population of twenty-seven millions, there were, in round numbers : —

1. Nearly twenty-three millions who were not members of any pure Protestant Church.

2. Upwards of nine millions who were not even under the influence of pure Christian teaching.

3. Six millions who could not properly be called Christians.

4. Upwards of five millions who did not even profess or call themselves Christian.

How comes it that Voluntaryism has failed to meet the terrible "exigencies" of this case? Perhaps the following statement from the same writer, as to the condition of American ministers, may throw some light upon this question :—

"POSSIBLY, WITH ECONOMY, ALL THE MINISTERS MAY LIVE UPON THEIR SALARIES; but it is impossible that any can grow rich upon them. The American churches have no inducements to offer in the shape of richly endowed benefices, or high temporal position; and there is no denomination which has the power to confer upon its ministers that *status* in society which belongs, by immemorial usage, to the clergy of the Church of England. Hence, it may fairly be presumed that a desire to preach the Gospel is the great motive which impels men into the ministry, in the orthodox churches of the United States.—*Religious Aspect of America*, p. 29.

Whether "this may fairly be presumed," is very doubtful; but it is pretty plain what is the great motive which impels the 12,000 who will not enter the ministry. POSSIBLY, they think that, even with economy, they could not live upon their salaries.

It has been alleged that Voluntaryism tends to multiply sects. How is this in America? No less than "one hundred different denominations" are enumerated in the American census, amongst whom the following singular names occur. There are Democratic Gospel, Ebenezer Socialists, New Lights, Tunkers, Superalists, Cosmopolites, Free Enquirers, Children of Peace, Inspired Church, Pathonites, Believers in God, Perfectionists, and Spiritualists.

Dr. Foster has given it as his opinion before the Church Rate Committee, that if the Establishment were abolished, a great many of the dissenters would turn Episcopalians.

The abolishing of an Establishment does not seem to have had this effect in America. But Dr. Foster confesses his ignorance of American sects. The above list may, perhaps, induce him to recal his prophecy.

Again; voluntaryism, we maintain, tends to enslave and degrade the pulpit. Hear our authoress on this subject.

"The pulpit exercises a most powerful influence in America; I doubt whether any practice could stand for many years before its denunciation if pronounced unanimously. *And here the great crime and plague spot of the American churches is seen. The great progress made by the slave power, during the last thirty years, is mainly to be attributed to them.*

"Under the influence, and with the sanction of, the clergy, the South has come to regard slavery as 'a patriarchal institution, an ordinance of God, an equal advantage to the master and the slave, elevating both, as strength, wealth, and power; and as one of the main pillars, and controlling influences of modern civilization." The churches are bound up with the system; they are rich in human property; the bishops and clergy of the denominations, the office bearers, and the communicants are slave holders, and buy and sell their fellow men, whom they profess to recognize as 'temples of the Holy Ghost.' I have heard slavery extolled in Southern pulpits as the 'only successful missionary institution which the world has ever seen.' I have heard these words used in prayer in a Presbyterian church by a minister of whose personal piety I entertain, no doubt—'We thank Thee, O Lord, that from a barbarous land where idols are worshipped in blood and flame, Thou hast brought a great multitude to our shores to sit at our feet, and learn Thy Gospel.'"—*Religious Aspect*, p. 105.

Our "stereotyped" liturgy, at least preserves us from hearing such a litany as this!

"The sacred marriage words 'until death us do part' are perverted by Southern ministers in the case of slaves, into, 'until we are unavoidably separated.' And ministers of the highest position not only palliate but approve of this base outrage upon humanity!"

"Among the 800 ministers of New York and Philadelphia, few are found bold enough to denounce the connection which many of their congregations have with the slave system, or to interpret practically our Saviour's golden rule. Albert Barnes, the learned commentator, and Beecher and Cheever of New York, boldly testify against slavery; *but the faithfulness of the latter in condemning the sins of the churches in connection with it has kept his congregation in a continual ferment, and his resignation has been more than once demanded; for no offence is less likely to meet with lenient treatment than a testimony against slavery.*"—*Ibid*, p. 779.

"State control" may be a great evil in our English Church, but neither Queen, Lords, nor Commons, can call upon a clergyman to "resign" for denouncing any one of our national sins. But while this writer thus gives evidence of the inju-

rious working of the Voluntary principle in America, she gives indirectly a striking proof of the value of an Establishment.

"Congregationalism became the '*established*' form of Church government about 1640 in New England, and though, in the cities, Episcopalian and other congregations are to be found, it is still all powerful, and to its form of government and doctrine the masses of the people are very strongly attached. On entering more minutely upon the state of religion in New England we shall find some things which are unsatisfactory; but, partly owing to the somewhat isolated position of these States, arising from soil and climate, yet mainly to the influence of a pure faith, and the upright though occasionally intolerant character of the early settlers, it is probable, that, as far as its morals are concerned, New England is the fairest portion of the world."—*Religious Aspect*, p. 13.

So that while, in all other parts of America, there is a sad decay of religion, it appears that mainly in that part of the country where there was once an Establishment, and in that religious body which was formerly the Established one, there is still by far the most vigorous spiritual life.

We have, however, other and more important as well as later evidence from America. Our next witness shall be a publication emanating from the United Presbyterian and Congregational bodies in America. It is entitled A PLEA FOR HOME MISSIONS, and dated 1858. It shall tell us how Voluntaryism in America does the MISSIONARY WORK of the Church.

ALARMING RELIGIOUS DESTITUTION.

"Our confidence in the final triumph of Christianity upon these shores, is not based upon any apparent nearness of that great consummation. Indeed, we can hardly contemplate the present character of our people without dismay. In high places and low, among officers of state, in circles of wealth, over broad regions of rich farms and plantations, and in centres of trade, we seem to find a terrible corruption—an appalling faithlessness, venality, and boldness in wrong doing. When we begin to inquire into the circumstances which explain the possibility of these things, we discover *alarming religious destitutions*, destitutions which amount to something worse than mere want—to an obstacle, and even a hostility—the destitutions and the wickedness mutually aggravating each other."

"The actual condition of this part of the missionary field is not easily gathered from mere statistics, or description; and the following extracts from recent reports of agents, convey little more than a suggestion of the reality. We give, first, statements of the destitutions in Iowa, and in Ohio, which are somewhat more full than those relating to the other states, and which, besides, may be viewed as, in a general way, illustrative of the condition, *the one of the* NEWER, *the other of the* OLDER portions of the Missionary field."

Iowa.

"We have between thirty and forty congregational and Presbyterian churches that ought to be immediately supplied with ministers. Just now, every added month of destitution involves a loss of efficiency that it will be, in many instances, a slow and toilsome work to regain, and a sacrifice of power for good in the wide regions over which their influence ought to extend, a power that belongs only to that brief period during the process of settlement, when the unsettled elements of society are comparatively plastic. Shall these churches be suffered to languish in comparative inefficiency, or, as the case may be with reference to some of them, to become altogether extinct, because *none appear to break unto them the bread of life, and cheer them on in the work of the Lord?*"

"A missionary, stationed in one of the most sparsely populated of them, says :— 'When I look over this whole section of country, I feel almost heart sick at the destitution it presents. *There is only one Church organization (a Baptist), and that very weak, in this county, beside our own. Something like this, every minister in the State would say, who measures his field by the limits of his county.*"

Significant Facts.

"A correspondent has obligingly sent us the following statistics concerning the denominational relations of the members of the Iowa *House of Representatives*, in January, 1858. The facts were furnished by the gentlemen themselves. The House consisted of *seventy-two* members, who individually reported their religious connections, as here given :—

Methodist	12	Universalist	3
Presbyterian	6	Universal Toleration	1
Old School Presbyterian	1	Unitarian	1
Associate	1	Catholic	1
Associate Ref'd Pres.	1	Liberal	2
Baptist	4	Golden Rule	2
Episcopal	4	Christian	3
Lutheran	1	Disciples	1
Orthodox	2	All	9
Congregational	1	None	16

If the first ten of these classes be called evangelical, and the others unevangelical, then *thirty-three* belong to the former, and *thirty-nine* to the latter. These figures are supposed to "give a tolerably fair representation of religion in Iowa. They show that opinion is free over her broad prairies." Do they not also show a lamentable *religious destitution?* Here is a decided majority of the law-makers of this growing state not so much as *connected* with Evangelical denominations. Let it be observed, that in this fact, we have but a restatement of those destitutions already given. If whole counties are left without any stable religious influences, and other counties of great importance fail of being even half supplied, we must expect this great want to report itself elsewhere—in the character of all "representatives of the people" and of their legislation; in the tone of the press and of general public sentiment."

Indiana.

"At present, there are about 150 Constitutional, Presbyterian, and congregational churches in Indiana; and many of these are so feeble as scarcely to have a name to live. To supply these churches, and to make further aggression upon the kingdom of darkness, there are *sixty-five ministers*, giving themselves wholly to the work of the sacred office. *More than half the counties* have no resident Presbyterian, or

congregational minister: and almost half of them have no church connected with these denominations. The O.S. Presbyterian Churches are generally in the same counties with our own.

"The state of Indiana must be accounted, so far as our two affiliated denominations are concerned, scarcely more than one vast destitution. One hundred and fifty churches and seventy ministers in a population of 1,200,000, increasing, also, at the rate of 43 per cent. in ten years, can only suffice to create a want; they cannot meet it. The work of the Society in this state is but just begun.

"What shall we say of such a region as is presented to our view in Lake County, so accessible by land and water, with its population of 20,000 souls, and yet, with the exception of two localities, all one wide waste, 'burnt over' by spasmodic excitements, until it now 'affords little encouragement to hope for any good thing?'"

Proportions of Strong and Weak Churches.

"More than one-fifth of all the churches connected with these denominations may be counted as *very weak*, none of them having more than twenty-five members, and the average falling considerably below that number. Nearly one-fourth may be counted as *weak*, their membership ranging between twenty-five and fifty; and these, taken together with those that are weaker yet, constitute nearly 43 per cent. of the whole. More than two-thirds of all the churches do not contain over one hundred members. Those that exceed one hundred are about 31 per cent. and those that exceed two hundred are not quite 11 per cent. of the entire number."

Present Supply of Ministers Inadequate.

"The whole number of ministers is 6,150. The number of pastors and stated supplies (errors excepted) is 4,336, leaving 1,814 to be classed as without charge, as professors, teachers, editors, agents, secretaries, &c.

"The number of churches in the three denominations whose membership is reported as exceeding fifty, is some five hundred less than the number of pastors and stated supplies. If, *therefore, each of these five hundred men were to occupy two churches, more than sixteen hundred churches would still be left destitute;* and if allowance be be made for those not reporting, this number must be taken as *exceeding two thousand.* Probably none of these contain more than thirty-five members."

Proportion of Weak Churches at the West.

"But facts are at hand which show that the relative number of feeble Churches is much larger at the West than at the East. Of the Churches in Illinois and Iowa connected with three leading denominations, the proportion that must be accounted very weak—having not more than twenty five communicants—is almost twice as great as in the same denominations taken entire, and amounts to nearly *two fifths* of the whole number reporting. These, again, taken with those whose membership ranges between twenty five and fifty, make up nearly 70 *per cent.* of the whole!"

"Furthermore, an examination of the statistics of the co-operative denominations for the year 1855–6 shows, that in Iowa, 105 Churches, out of the 126 that are connected with these denominations, report less than fifty members; in Wisconsin, 93, out of 141; in Illinois, 148, out of 244; in Indiana, 100, out of 149; in Ohio, 174, out of 344; and in Michigan, 109, out of 194; making a *total* of 729, in an aggregate of 1,198 reporting—while of the 96 failing to report, the great majority, doubtless, fall into the same class. IT WOULD BE SAFE TO SAY, THAT OF 1,300 CHURCHES, 800 CONTAIN LESS THAN 50 MEMBERS EACH."

ALL THIS WEAKNESS NOT NECESSARY.

"But it is possible that some, calling to mind the large number of weak congregations at the East, where denominational rivalry is less active than at the West, may say that this feebleness is wholly owing to the necessary imperfection of human arrangements, that we must always have the poor with us; and that the sectarianism of the West has little responsibility for this feebleness of her Churches. It were sufficient to suggest, in reply—that the weak Churches in the older states are found where the communities are weak, in barren or uncultivated districts; or in regions depopulated by emigration; *while very many of the feeble Churches of the West are in populous, vigorous, growing communities, where nothing but irreligion or division could keep the congregations from being numerous, and where nothing less than the combination of the two could keep them so small as they are.* Yonder are three debilitated Churches struggling for existence against each other. Is it necessary to ask, whether, if they were joined in one, and were with one heart and voice contending for the kingdom of God, the christian strength of that community would not be greater?"

We are now in a position to appreciate the value of the statement that "there is a Church edifice in America to every 646 individuals." The writer, in giving us this pleasing ratio of *Churches to population*, forgot to give us, at the same time, the ratio of *members to Churches.* What does it avail us to know that for every six hundred and fifty persons in a country there is a religious organization, unless we also know how many of these persons belong to it? There is a famous case upon the law books, of a tailor who was sued by a customer for embezzling nearly the whole of a piece of cloth which he had given him with orders to make from it twelve caps. The defendant pleaded that he had literally complied with his customer's order, producing, at the same time in court, twelve cloth caps, each the size of his thumb, alleging that the plaintiff had said nothing in his order as to the size of the caps. Our authoress has dealt in just such a way with the churches which she produces as proof of the success of American voluntaryism. She has said nothing as to their size. We now see that there might be a church to every 646 persons in a community, and yet that 600 of the number might still be heathens or infidels.

Indeed, mention is made in Prime's "Power of Prayer," of one village in Iowa, containing NINE HUNDRED INHABITANTS, WITHOUT MINISTER, CHURCH, OR MEANS OF GRACE!

So much for averages. Well was it said that nothing is more fallacious than figures, excepting facts.

But the writers in the "Plea for Home Missions" proceed to assign a reason for these failures of voluntaryism, which is certainly startling and striking enough, coming as it does from non-conformists. It is headed :—

Weakness of Churches—Sectarianism.

"It is but too evident that our American Christendom is prosecuting its work, in some respects, at a disadvantage. True, funds have been furnished with a commendable liberality; but, worse than a dearth of money which a few months of vigorous effort, or a prosperous turn in the market, might remove—THERE IS A DEARTH OF MEN. Fields are explored, openings are found, communities are fast forming, and even make urgent requests for ministers; but often there are no ministers to send. The great exigency of the missionary work now is, the want of capable and devoted *men*."

"However we may charge this upon the lukewarmness of the churches, upon the absence of correct views respecting ministerial support, and its consequent meagreness, or on the prevalence among young men of a subtle scepticism, we may not shut our eyes to the fact, that *the want must continue as long as unfortunate division of the field continues, which must ever come from divided counsels, and sectarian rivalries. Destitutions are likely to last while alienations last.*

Number and Policy of Denominations.

"Four of these—the N.S. Presbyterians, the O.S. Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, and Baptists, together with the Methodists and Episcopalians—habitually esteem it a matter of obligation to be represented in every community where it is possible to gather a church of their name; and, in establishing these churches, deem it no part of their duty to consider, in the least, the welfare of any congregation of a different name that may have been previously gathered. Leaving out of the account all the minor sects, we have five great Evangelical Churches, each one of whom feels bound to push forward its own growth, with a disregard of the interest of all other churches which is equivalent to an ignoring of their existence, and, in practical effect, identifies the Kingdom of God with the denomination. *Every denomination naturally feels that it must be strong in the centres of population; and so, without asking whether the Church of Christ needs so many congregations there, we crowd our five, or (now-a-days) our six separate enterprises, of as many rival names, into a little place where two churches would do more good than the half dozen.*

Bad Effects.

"But a third consequence of this over-crowding of one portion of the missionary field is the *destitution* of other portions, *while many villages are so well supplied as to leave pastors and churches leisure to quarrel*, MANY RURAL DISTRICTS AND YOUNG COMMUNITIES ARE ALMOST TOTALLY NEGLECTED. If all the preachers in the United States were Evangelical men, well educated, and devoted to their work, they would no more than supply the real wants of the country, upon a system of wise distribution. On a system, then, so unfortunate as this, its destitutions are not supplied; and we hear from all quarters the cry—send more labourers into the harvest !"

A Cause of Unwillingness to Enter the Ministry.

"Again, a fourth consequence of our denominational divisions, and another cause of destitution, is seen in the *difficulty of persuading young men of enterprise to enter the ministry.* When we consider how the field of ministerial labour is cut up into small parishes, affording to men of superior capacity but a limited scope for some of their best qualities, with scarcely the possibility of much improvement; promising, also, only a meagre support,* and a moderate usefulness, we cannot wonder that young men who are conscious of the ability to occupy a larger sphere, and whose nature thirsts after something stirring and an opportunity for a hopeful struggle and for achievement, should often shrink from the seeming narrowness and hopelessness of the work which is here offerred them. We need not praise the truthfulness of their appreciation, in all particulars, but have we, on the whole, a right to anticipate a different decision? No! the result is manifestly one that must be *expected.* There is not the least doubt that this diminution in the size of parishes is also a diminution in the attractiveness of the pastoral office. And so, this very multitude of denominations which has increased the want of ministers, operates, in more ways than one, to diminish the supply."

"Furthermore, it tends to keep out *a class* of men that is very much needed. Nothing can be more obvious than that the West demands a high order of ability, of education, and of character, in those who are to be founders of its churches and colleges, who are to shape the morals of its people, and their religious faith and life. Under men able to command respect as instructors, leaders, and organizers, as well as in the more tender relations of the pastoral office, churches will rise to a quick maturity, and soon become the stout allies of every good cause, though, otherwise, sure to linger for many years in a state of dreary inefficiency and disconsolate dependence."

* Missionary Retrenchment.

How meagre, the following letter from a Western missionary will show:—"I am in great perplexity in regard to the future. But what shall be done? 'Retrenchment?' Ah! yes, the real necessaries of life are very differently understood; can I not economize? I have a horse, buggy, and harness, all nearly worn out, which would bring but little if sold; and yet they are absolutely indispensable on this field of labour, where appointments and people are scattered over so much territory. 'Tea and coffee!' We have dispensed with them long since. 'Books, periodicals, and papers!' I did venture nearly a year since to buy ten dollars' worth at a bargain, of a brother minister, because on account of ill-health, he had to return eastward, and I have not paid for them yet, because of poverty which I did not foresee. I do take the Bibliotheca Sacra, and would stop it—yes, *I will* stop it if I can possibly spare the money to pay the arrearage of one year's subscription, before the issue of the next number. I took out a policy of Life Insurance, but I can no longer pay the premium, and have written to surrender the policy to the Company. This retrenchment and economizing must be done, but still I fear it will not be sufficient. What is *duty* under these circumstances? 'Owe no man anything.' 'He that provideth not for his own house,' &c. I wonder if these texts were intended to include home missionaries?"

Thirty Miles.

"As an illustration of the important position we occupy in this region, permit me to state that last week two families—or rather one family and half of another (the father being left at home, sick)—came thirty miles with an ox team, to get their two infant children baptized. They urged upon me a donation of one dollar each, as a thank-offering to God for the blessing of this service to them and their children. These sheep in the wilderness I could not search out, for two reasons: first, I have had more on my hands here than I could well attend to; and second, I am too poor to keep or hire a horse.

"The fee was a 'God-send.' We had been, for some time, borrowing, and the last dollar was spent, the flour-barrel was empty, and over every store door is now written, in large letters, '*Terms* Cash!'"

WASTE OF RESOURCES.

"Now it is obvious, upon first inspection, that a system, (say, rather, a confusion) characterised by such an unfortunate distribution of labour—in some localities multiplying churches to excess, and leaving other regions destitute; making the town congregations weak from their very multitude, and losing the happy moment in communities that are just forming, from the want of the right men to occupy them; and so stimulating sectarian rivalries, that ministers frequently abuse as much time and strength in working against each other, as they use in working for Christ; that such a system must result in a great *waste of power*, and this, of all kinds. *Accordingly we find that Churches are born weak, and compelled to worry through a long and fretful infancy, are kept on a diet irritatingly low, and compelled to struggle with slow and uncertain growth, toward a maturity which must come late, and may come never.*"

The foregoing extracts—and they are a very small portion of what might have been given—yield sad but unanswerable proof that Voluntaryism in the United States "has totally failed to supply means of religious instruction and edification in timely abundance to meet the exigencies of the case." It has utterly failed to provide the supply of missionary ministers needed to overtake the growing population of the States. It has left that population in a state of spiritual destitution which those who know it best describe as "awful," "alarming," "sickening." It has left thousands of churches without pastors —whole districts without churches—tens of thousands of the population without any means of grace whatever.

And the causes of this terrible failure are stated—not by English Churchmen, but by American Voluntaryists—to be: "poverty of ministers, and deficiency of talent in those who are ordained," arising from "inadequate inducements to enter the ministry," and this again from "sectarian rivalries."

No words of mine could add force to this terrible picture of the results of Voluntaryism drawn by the hands of Voluntaryists themselves.

But it may be said, You have drawn your instances from the Western States, where the population is as yet scanty, and the people rude and barbarous. You should see what Voluntaryism can do in the older and more settled States. If this were so, it would only prove that Voluntaryism cannot do missionary work just where that work is most needed, in young rising communities, which it is all-important to leaven as soon and as thoroughly as possible with

Gospel truth. But even this poor plea has been anticipated in the statement above quoted, that the terrible spiritual destitutions of the West are to be found in its crowded and prosperous communities quite as much as in its thinly-peopled country districts.

We have, however, another witness to cite, who shall tell us how Voluntaryism does PASTORAL work in the older and more settled States.

There exists in America an association composed of members of nearly all the evangelical denominations, including Episcopalians, the object of which is to distribute religious publications by an extensive system of colportage all over the country. In the Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the American Tract Society, for last year, I find the following statements:—

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, MAY 11th, 1859.

"IN STATING THE ADMITTED FACT THAT AT LEAST ONE THIRD OF OUR POPULATION HABITUALLY NEGLECT THE PREACHING OF A TRUE GOSPEL, and are therefore hastening unreconciled to the judgment bar, we but half present to the christian heart, a thought which should move that heart to its depths. The saddest aspect of this fact is, that *many ten thousands of these unevangelized ones, have no Gospel preaching within their reach, no one to warn them of a coming judgment, or invite them to a gracious Saviour—no book, no Bible.* In the newer portions of our constantly expanding settlements—a selvage on the western border of that vast robe of population spreading over this mighty continent, a hundred miles in breadth, extending from the northern verge of our country to the southern seas, and flowing off to California, and high up to the Pacific coast—are these out-dwellers found; many thousands of whom are beyond the reach as yet, and for the next generation, of regular Sabbath services *—although the Church in her distinct ecclesiastical form is pressing on, taking possession of the more prominent points, and gathering to her sanctuaries the less scattered settlements, unblessed multitudes must remain for years beyond her beneficient embrace.*"

"In addition, there are many portions of the more densely settled states, where, from the poverty of the soil, unhealthiness of locality, character of the institutions, or other causes, the population is scarce, and without Bibles, books, schools, or churches to reach and save the inhabitants in these by-ways and mountain fastnesses, cypress swamps and wide prairies; there is urgent necessity of such an agency.

"All this would remain true, even if there were no "regions beyond" the compass of our thirty-three States. But when we note the startling fact, that we have a territorial area more extensive than that covered by all the States already formed, and thus catch a glimpse of the expansion of our population for ages to come, the necessity, present and prospective, becomes still more imperative. *That wide numerous perishing destitutions do now exist, destitutions of a preached gospel, of a printed gospel, of the living epistles as read in the holy lives of pious men—that myriads of youth are growing up in our land without ever hearing a gospel sermon—that in*

many places where a few Christians have located, there is 'a famine in the land, no a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord'—that in these wastes, ignorance, vice, and infidelity prevail; and *that great multitudes of these souls will be lost eternally unless some outgoing, aggressive, personal, persevering effort be made to reach them, is too sadly true to admit of a question.* Not less true nor less sad is the fact that many *might* hear the gospel who utterly neglect it, and who will never hear it unless it is *carried to them and urged upon them.*"

STATISTICS FOR THE LAST YEAR.

"That in visiting only one-eighth of our population there should have been found 445,690 souls destitute of the divine Record is a fact as startling as it is sad. There is revealed in another column the still stronger fact that in this land of a free press, with its multitudinous wide-spread issues, there should be found in one single year, and by a few colporteurs, 44,996 families, or 224,980 souls, without a single page of religious truth in their hands to warn them of a coming judgment, and point them to a gracious Saviour. Yet it must be admitted that over large districts of our newer states and territories, no book stores are found, and no means of procuring religious truth, if ever so much desired."

CONNECTICUT AND RHODE ISLAND.

"While the great field of operation for the Tract Society is in the new and more sparsely settled and destitute parts of the land, yet I am more and more convinced that in *this* field in Connecticut and Rhode Island there is a demand for just that kind of instrumentality which our Society seeks to employ. NEARLY ONE HALF THE POPULATION OF THESE STATES ARE RARELY PRESENT IN ANY SANCTUARY OF GOD. *They are rarely sought out, rarely addressed on the great subject of the soul's salvation.*"

Compare this last statement with that made in the "Religious Aspects":—

"Under the Voluntary system in the United States, the poor are more systematically 'sought out' than under the Parochial system in our English cities."

NEW YORK AND CANADA WEST.

"There is reason to believe that *from one-third to one-half of the whole population* maintain no regular attendance upon the means of grace. The official census of the State presents a still darker picture than this, giving the amount of Church accommodation as sufficient for only two-thirds of the population, and one-third only as regular attendants on divine worship. Instituting more particular inquiries, we find whole neighbourhoods in the very heart of the State, as well as many more in the newer settled portions, whose destitutions are very great, and not to be soon supplied by ordinary means.

"I have found an unusual amount of destitution and irreligion, and whole settlements that entirely neglect the sanctuary: modern Spiritualism and Universalism have blinded the people; and many have become the victims of these delusions."

"In one neighbourhood I found 15 or 20 families, nearly all of whom are neglecters of religion. *They told me they had not had any preaching in that place, except at funerals, for thirteen years.* Within four or five miles there are four churches all

having stated ministry, and yet that destitute portion was unvisited by ministers or church members, and they themselves wickedly neglecting to attend upon the means of grace. I hope I have done something for their good, and to induce Christians, and especially the ministers, to go and preach the gospel to them."

"*In many parts of my field they are quite destitute of religious privileges.* I find many in my visits who seldom if ever attend a religious meeting; and were it not for *the institution of colportage they, to all human appearance, would live and die almost like the heathen, without the Bible, or any religious books, or a knowledge of salvation.*

NEGLECT OF THE SANCTUARY.

One colporteur says, "From the best of my judgment I should think that one-half of the entire population neglect evangelical preaching." Another says, "While few will acknowledge that they habitually neglect attending some religious meeting on the Sabbath, it is apparent that not one half the community at large attend regularly." Another writes, "About one in seven are habitual neglecters of evangelical preaching, but a much larger proportion attend but a very small part of the time." A German colporteur says, "About three-fourths attend no evangelical preaching." Another German, in one of the cities, writes, "The tenth part of the German population neglect evangelical preaching." "It is thought," says another, "that one-half of the people neglect the preached Gospel; yet many of them hear, occasionally, a funeral sermon, and rather extol themselves for so doing." "Two-thirds of the entire population on my field, which is about thirty thousand," writes another, "are very irregular in their attendance on evangelical preaching, or neglect it altogether." "Judging the most favourably," says another, "I think that not more than one-half of the people attend worship, and many of these only occasionally; probably not more than one-third are regular attendants."

NEGLECT OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

N. S——, in Pennsylvania, writes:—

"From one-third to one-half habitually neglect evangelical preaching."

D. H. S——, in Pennsylvania:—

"Fully one-fifth of the entire population are habitual neglecters of the house of God."

J. M——, in Ohio:—

"Two-fifths neglect the house of God." Another writes, "About one-fifth habitually neglect the sanctuary."

H. S——, in Pennsylvania:—

"From one-fourth to one-third are habitual neglecters of evangelical preaching, but the number is decreasing. *A part of this neglect arises from want of opportunity.*"

O. J. F——, Ohio:—

"About one-third of the neglecters could not attend evangelical preaching, *as they have not the opportunity.*"

J. W. R——, in Pennsylvania, writes:—

"About one-fourth of the habitual neglecters of the preached Gospel in this county could not hear it if they desired to."

And it is in the face of such facts as these that the "Englishwoman in America" asks us to believe that "there is no person in any of the settled districts, who cannot have, if he desires it, the privilege of religious worship." The observations of a lady must not be roughly criticised: had the writer been a man, one might have been tempted to quote Bishop Butler's famous saying, "It is a matter of great patience to hear some men talk."

"The field is one of marked spiritual destitution. It is just such, however, as the Society was formed to cultivate. THAT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS *are living on the territory occupied by this branch, without Sabbath and sanctuary influences, without the pastor, with no one to care for their souls*, forms the strongest argument for prosecuting and expanding the work. The field it is true is not self-sustaining. This, however, affords no plea for neglecting it, or diminishing expenditure needed for its cultivation. To mete out the bread of life to such communities only as can or will bear the pecuniary expenditure involved, is a principle of action, the legitimate operation of which would make the very existence of this Society a questionable subject, would cut the sinews of every benevolent enterprise, paralyze the aggressive energies of the Church, and lead to the abandonment of all strictly missionary efforts."

VIRGINIA.

"There is a valley, about 40 miles in length, that lies between two mountains in C—— County, containing a settlement of at least forty-five families. There is not a single church in this valley, nor any permanent school. Occasionally, and at long intervals, a stray teacher makes his appearance, and stays a few months during the winter season, and then leaves. This winter they have two schools. *The families average over four and a half to the household, yet there are but fifteen professing Christians in the whole community.* One of these is a distiller, and another sells liquor, and all drink more or less. Not one of their number had the Society's books. Not one of their children had ever read, and many of them never heard of the ten commandments.

"It has been my great aim to instruct these poor ignorant people. They ought not to be ranked with those who neglect Evangelical preaching, for they are anxious to enjoy it. A lady, the mother of nine children, told me that, during her married life, she has heard but *three* sermons, and only one of her children had ever heard a sermon."

"I visited a family, that for some reasons, I thought were destitute of the Bible. I asked the mother, 'Have you a Bible?' 'Oh yes, sir—yes, indeed!' She brought it out; it was the adventures of General Tom Thumb. I said, '*That* is not a Bible.' She replied, that 'she thought any book was a Bible.'"

NORTH CAROLINA.

"More than five hundred families said they never had a religious visit and prayer at their homes before. I think there are two principal reasons for this :—First *almost every minister of every denomination has as much as he can do, after preaching, to visit the members of his charge; and in frequent instances, such are the circumstances, that he cannot visit his own members, leaving him comparatively no time to go in the 'regions beyond,'* to visit and pray with ungodly families, who certainly should be kindly reached at their homes that the Gospel may be preached to 'every creature.' Secondly, because a large majority of the laity neglect the daily reading of the Bible and prayer in their own families: consequently comparatively few are prepared or willing to talk on religion, and pray with their neighbours."

"In view of such facts, which I fear are true in more or less of our counties, how can every family have a religious visit, and the 'preaching of the word' be accomplished 'everywhere' and to 'every creature,' the sick, the poor, the ignorant, and wicked, whether they be at our doors, or at a distance in the swamps and mountains?

"How can the word be preached to every creature?" A sad question, in a country where Voluntaryism *cannot*, and an Establishment *must not*, "reach the poor, and ignorant, and wicked," even at men's doors!"

CINCINNATI.

"Our great want as a state is, that the truth be both brought in contact with individual destitute souls, and more extensively diffused among the whole population. Notwithstanding the healthful and indispensable action of our several church organizations, it is quite evident that large portions, if not the bulk, of our people feel not their direct influence. What is required in conjunction with our church centres of light seems to be just some such moral apparatus as this Society furnishes for forcing out light and truth over the whole surface of society, and at the same time bringing it home to thousands of isolated souls, now hid away from the light because their 'deeds are evil.'

"Christians in the older portion of our country can scarcely imagine what is the true condition of the Church in certain uncultivated quarters, where large accessions are periodically made, and those admitted to the Church then left to live on as best they may, surrounded by all untoward influences, and no adequate provision for their increase in knowledge, without which their growth in grace and usefulness is next to impossible. There are regions where darkness covers the Church, and gross darkness the people at large."

"On making enquiries as to the foreign population in our Western cities, I have been startled by the fact that the great mass of them have no church privileges, at least are not attendants at church, are largely under the influence of infidel clubs and books, and are in general almost as ignorant of saving truth as Hindoos. This is an appalling fact; *and there is no agency, nor can there be for years to come, to meet this large class of perishing souls, save that used by this Society!*"

Such is Voluntaryism in America!

And now I claim to have proved my case. I claim to have proved that Voluntaryism is not so infinitely superior to an Establishment that the English people should be called upon to exchange the one for the other. This is all that we Churchmen are bound to shew. But the facts of the case prove much more. The facts from America alone give clear and unmistakeable evidence, that the Voluntary principle under the most favourable circumstances can do neither the Missionary nor yet the Pastoral work of the Church upon anything like a national scale. Voluntaryism in America is simply a complete and disastrous failure; why should we suppose that in England it would prove a brilliant and triumphant success?

And now that we have, as we think, thus proved our case—now that we have at least shewn how doubtful and how dangerous would be the experiment which we are asked to try of Americanizing our English Church—we make our appeal to all those with whom really rests the decision of the momentous question—Shall England preserve or destroy her National Church? From the noisy clamour and unreasoning prejudice of ignorant and unreflecting men—from the vulgar and virulent libels of Liberation Societies and their itinerating agents—from the bitter and undisguised hatred of the infidel and the irreligious—we make our solemn appeal to the intelligent, the reflecting, the religious portion of our community, of whatever creed or sect or party. With such alone we care to argue our great cause. Happily it is with such alone it lies to give a final judgment upon it. England is not yet so far Americanized either in Church or in State that the shout of ignorant multitudes can overbear the calm deliberations of wise and thoughtful men.

We appeal to the STATESMEN of England, not to mere Members of Parliament, but to those among them who have won the name and hold the place of THE MEN of the State. Men to whom we look for something more than the reflection in our national councils of the wishes or the whims of a majority of their constituencies. Men who have higher aims than the tenure of a seat, and a higher principle of action than

that of "bowing to the public opinion" of the hour. To such men we would say—you at least hold it to be your duty to care for and provide for the moral well-being of the people of this realm. You do not believe that the highest functions of the rulers of a Christian State are only those of the policeman on a larger scale. You feel that the education, the civilization, the moral elevation of the masses should claim in your thoughts and in your aims, at least as prominent a place as the punishment of their offences or the promotion of their wealth. You hold that the prevention of crime and the reformation of the criminal should go hand in hand with its repression.

We ask you then—which of the great moral and social agencies now at work for the improvement of the people have you thought it safe to leave entirely to the Voluntary principle? You are giving the stimulus and the guidance of State patronage and control to poor relief, to education, to the cultivation of art and science, and even of taste. For these purposes you have poor-rates and educational grants, and grants for libraries and museums and picture galleries. Must then all other means and helps to the moral and social happiness of the nation have their State support, and yet that support be refused to, or withdrawn from, the most effectual of them all? May art and science, and education, and charity have their national endowments, and yet the art of holy living and of holy dying—the science that reveals the knowledge of God—the education that prepares for eternity—the charity that supplies the bread of life to immortal souls, be thought unworthy of all aid from a Christian State? Is a picture gallery so evidently superior a social and moral agency to a church;—is the curator of a museum so manifestly a better public instructor than a Clergyman, that it is a duty to endow the one and a folly to endow the other? Are Titian, and Rubens, and Etty such invaluable teachers of morals that you must furnish places in which the people may crowd to learn the lessons which they teach; and are Isaiah and Jeremiah, and Paul and John, of so little value that it is not worth your while to provide places where the

people may come to gaze upon the pictures they pourtray? Why should a place among the public instructors of the nation be refused to the pastor, which is given to the schoolmaster and the painter, and the sculptor?

Will it be said that in the case of the former, the variety of opinion is so great, that it is impossible to please all in your patronage, and therefore you must aid none? Do you proceed upon this principle in those other departments of public instruction which you are promoting by State aid? Do you leave it to the people to decide what works of what masters shall be purchased for their galleries, or what qualifications shall be required in their school teachers? Have you not out of many conflicting plans and theories, and tastes, selected those which seemed to you the best, and acted on them, regardless of the "infinite variety of opinion" which might differ from you, or the number of persons who might complain that their tastes had not been consulted? Why should you hesitate to do the like in the matter of religious instruction?

Or must we argue, before you, the wretched pleas that no man should be asked to contribute to a system of which he disapproves, or an institution from which he himself derives no benefit. Surely you do not need to be told that the first of these would simply make all taxation impossible—the plea of conscientious objection being of course one of universal application—and one which, once admitted, would be sure to be nearly universally made; while the second is too nakedly and undisguisedly selfish, too transparently absurd to be listened to; according to it, no childless man should be called upan to pay taxes for education, no rich man for a poor-rate, no blind man for a national gallery. You at least know well that the principle of all taxation is that it is levied, not for the good of each particular tax-payer by each particular item of expenditure, but for the general good of all, and that those who pay for what they do not personally need, yet receive a large though indirect return in the general prosperity and well-being of the whole.

Nor surely will you repeat that oft-refuted but still oft-reiterated assertion, that the people may safely be left to

supply themselves with religious teachers, and that the religion which cannot obtain their support is not worth supporting. You have, in all your State provision for Education and for Art, proclaimed your belief that in all that concerns the mental and the moral wants of a people, a taste must be first created, a sense of need awakened, before there can be any demand for its gratification. You do not hold that the Education or the high art which cannot win public support is not worth supporting; on the contrary, you aid them because you believe that they are so good, so much above the appreciation of the masses, that they cannot be left to win their way among them unaided, but must be endowed that they may live. Are ignorance and prejudice less formidable foes to the religious teacher than they are to all other teachers? Must the test of purity and worth in his case be made exactly the opposite of that of all the rest? Are they to be held unpopular in proportion to their excellence, and he excellent only in proportion to his popularity?

Surely if our Church is to be overthrown, it will not be by the force of such arguments as these. Surely these will not be the reasons which you, at least, could condescend to give as those which compelled you to decree her destruction.

There is one, and as it seems to us, only one other motive which may weigh with you—reason we cannot call it; motive, but too powerful, it unhappily too often is—"Public Opinion" may seem to you to call for such a cause; political expediency may seem to demand it. Against such considerations as these even the bravest of our modern statesmen are not always proof. But if you think such an event possible, it rests mainly with you to make it impossible. Your words have power, great and deserved power, in forming that very opinion that you fear. The public utterance of your mature and deliberate conviction, the clear expression of your fixed determination to maintain the Church of this realm, would go far to silence the clamour of noisy agitators, and to strengthen the resolution of timid and wavering friends. But if you will not do this; if you prefer waiting to see how the current flows—resolved only to swim with it, never to stem it; if you are prepared

when the time comes, to bow in slavish terror before a cry which, loud and fierce as it might be, would not be the voice of wisdom or of patriotism; then you must be prepared for more and larger concessions. The day that sees the statesmen of England yield to popular clamour the property and rights of the national Church, will see all other property and all other rights receive a shock that shall full surely and full speedily result in their destruction too. Those who refuse to defend the Church may soon be called upon to defend the last fragments of the State. Meanwhile, in proportion as you withdraw State aid and countenance from the national Church, you must be prepared to increase all other State appliances for the moral well-being of the nation. You will have to add to your police, to multiply your reformatories, to enlarge your workhouses, to pull down and rebuild your gaols, and if, at last, you complete the work of destruction, and sweep away, as you are exhorted to do, "the very dust of an Establishment," you will have only succeeded in destroying a cheap defence of order, a mighty agency for the civilization and peace and prosperity of your country, that all the wealth of your State ten times told can never replace.

But still more earnestly, still more solemnly do we appeal to the truly religious and conscientious among our opponents—that there are such we know—they are the salt and strength of their party—they are selected by the rest to lead the assault upon our church, well knowing as they do that such men alone as yet have any power really to injure us. To such really honest and conscientious Dissenters, we would say:—You believe, really and sincerely believe, that in destroying the Establishment, you would be increasing the power and efficiency of the Church as a religious organization in the land. Are you indeed quite sure of this? Do the facts of the case where Voluntaryism has been tried bear out your theory so fully? has Voluntaryism in America, for instance, displayed such power and efficiency as to leave no doubt in your mind that it would be wise and safe to trust all to it here? And if this be not absolutely certain; if there be room for doubt on this question, ask yourselves, is this a time for trying doubtful experiments

in Church or State? Is it at the moment when the tide of irreligion and infidelity and the wild, reckless, restless love of change, rising higher and higher, is dashing with unwonted violence against all the barriers of order, and of law, and of religion, that you would proceed to pull down the mole that your forefathers built, and that has braved the storms of so many centuries, only that you might replace it by some novel breakwater, of at best uncertain value, if not of proved inefficacy. Is it when the great hailstones are beginning to fall, that you would pull down the strong and stately building within which the piety of generations has found a shelter and a home, to build it again with what may prove too late to be the untempered mortar of a weak and vicious principle?

Pause, Christian brethren! we entreat you to pause and to consider well what you are doing, when you lend your powerful aid to such a work We will not urge on you those lower arguments which we use with men less earnest, less deeply and truly conscientious than yourselves. We will not argue with you of the legal rights of the Church, nor of the close connection of those rights with all other rights of property in the country. We will not talk to you of your obligation to pay a charge upon property which you purchased at a cheaper rate in consideration of that charge. We will not insult you by supposing that you object to any impost in support of the Church on the purely selfish ground that you derive no direct and personal benefit from its ministration. We give you credit for higher motives in your oppositon to our Church, as we know you give us credit for higher motives in the defence of it, than those of personal gain or loss. We believe you when you say that you mean the advancement of the cause of God and the kingdom of Christ in all you say and do against us. We will but ask you, who think so, one question; Who are your allies in this work? If you can for one moment turn your eyes from the fortress you are assailing, let them rest upon the soldiers who are fighting by your side. Who are they? Socialists, Chartists, Deists, Infidels, Atheists. Are they the friends of religion—the men whom you would expect to find

around you in any other enterprise for good? Do you suppose that these men believe that the destruction of the Establishment would tend to the furtherance of the cause of true religion among us? They know better. The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. With an unerring instinct taught them of their master, they choose for attack, not the weakest, but the strongest part of the fortress. Like wolves, they spring right at the throat; for there they know flows the life-blood. Is it with such men as these as your followers—is it with the cheers of such a host as this to encourage you—that you take the post they are only too glad to give you in the van of the assault upon our Zion? The people of God once refused the help of Samaritans to build the Temple of their nation; will you invite such help to pull our Temple down?

Surely you will not contend that the differences between us are so wide, so vital, as to justify you in such a course. Surely you will not adopt the plea that you cannot but refuse to support a different religion from your own. Is then ours indeed a different religion from yours, or is it only another form of the same religion? A different ritual and discipline if you will, but surely not so widely differing a creed, that it need strain your consciences to contribute to its support. We at least entertain no such scruples. Churchman as I am from the bottom of my heart, Churchman as I mean to live, and Churchman as I hope to die—if the question was to be put to me to-morrow: shall the endowments of the Church be secularized, or shall they be handed over to any one of the orthodox though rival sects?—I would answer, and the vast majority of Churchmen would I am convinced answer with me,—Take them all and do with them what good you can. If we may have them no longer, at least we rejoice to know they will be still employed for the support of pure religion, though the outward form of that religion differ from our own—better this a thousand times than that the country should be deprived of the blessings of a national provision for a Gospel ministry. Take our places to morrow and you would not find the majority of

Churchmen scrupling or refusing to pay rates or tithes to Orthodox Dissent—*

Why then should you object so strongly to contribute to the support of the Church? You tell us, and we rejoice to believe it, that old animosities are dying out between us—animosities, in the production of which every candid Churchman will own with regret that his Church had no small share, why then renew them in the most painful form? If the Fathers of Nonconformity, at a time when Nonconformity was enduring real wrongs and great indignities, could yet, even while smarting under their sufferings at the hands of an Established Church, defend the principle of an Establishment and insist upon the great duty of a national provision for religion; why must you, their descendants, now that Nonconformity has been released from all penalties and disabilities and stands the rival, but no longer necessarily the enemy of the Church; why must you demand, what they held it sacrilege even to think of, her spoilation? Judah has long since ceased to vex Ephraim; is it not time that Ephraim should cease to envy Judah?

One word to Churchmen. Brethren, you who are devotedly attached to our Church, let that attachment be an increasingly intelligent and religious attachment. Let Church and State be linked together in your minds, not as men join them over their cups, but as men join them in their prayers, in fervent and solemn entreaty, "that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us." Learn to value your Church, her rights and privileges, not because they are hers or yours, but because she holds them in sacred trust for the good of all the English people.

Stand up for the defence of your Church because you believe in your hearts and consciences that she is set for the defence of the Gospel in this realm of England. Love your church, for the principles which she inherits from our reformers and our martyrs; for the scriptural doctrines she has enshrined in

* This is no idle boast. In Scotland, where nine-tenths of the land is in the possession of Episcopal, heritors, tithes are freely paid for both Kirk and Manse. Who ever heard of an Episcopalian agitation against the Scotch Establishment?

her creeds and her articles; for the battles she has fought in days past, for truth against error, for liberty against despotism, for England against Rome; love her for the good fight she is fighting now against the sin and suffering, the ignorance and the crime that must be fought with and conquered if England is to be saved from an invasion infinitely worse than that of any foreign foe. Shew your love to her not only by upholding her on the hustings or in Parliament, but by helping her in the great work for which she is even now girding herself and going forth in the name and the power of her Lord and Master. Do this, and you need have no fear for the result. The Church of England has not yet become in this country "as the salt that has lost its savour" that we should dread her being "cast out and trodden under foot of men." Never was there a time when she displayed more vigour, more zeal, more spiritual life and activity. Never was the Spirit of God seen more visibly, more mightily, working in her, moving her to still greater and greater effort in the cause of Christ. Day by day we see her regaining lost ground and conquering new. She is to be seen standing, as she was ever wont to stand, in the fore-front of the great Christian battle with the error and the unbelief of the day; opposing to the enemies of truth the shield of her scriptural creeds and ritual, and the sword of her learned and able theology; she is making her voice to be heard among the rich and the great, and winning them to enlist with her in works of piety and charity: she is sending out her ministers to tell the story of the Gospel of peace among the poor and the ignorant and the outcast. All over the land she is being more and more felt and recognized as a great power for good and for God.

Let her but continue steadily in this career of self-improvement and of noble and strenuous effort. Let her but go on as she has been doing of later years, increasing her efficiency, removing her defects, spreading wider and wider the boundary of the influence she wields, and of the blessings she conveys, and you will soon cease to need "Church Defence Associations." The defence of the Church will be the good sense, the justice, the piety of the English people. The strong

deep current of a nation's reverent love, will flow yet deeper and stronger in the old accustomed channel; the blustering breeze of agitation may ripple its surface, it never shall have power to turn back the tide. From the country at large will come the demand for her preservation; from the throne to which she has been ever so unswervingly loyal; from the legislature, whose best ends and aims she is so faithfully promoting; from the learned, and the great, and the good, she has trained and nurtured; from the poor to whom she has ministered; from the outcasts she has reclaimed; aye, and at last, even from many a generous and converted opponent, there will come in answer to those who may demand her overthrow, one universal, loud, united, grateful voice—"DESTROY HER NOT: SHE IS A BLESSING IN THE MIDST OF US!"

APPENDIX.

TESTIMONY TO THE NECESSITY OF ENDOWMENTS.

Some valuable evidence as to the evils and difficulties of Church extension without proper endowment for the Ministry has been given by very competent witnesses before the Committee of the House of Lords on the "Deficiency of Means of Scriptural Instruction." 1858.

The BISHOP of RIPON, in answer to the question whether the miserable destitution "of some parts of his Diocese did not arise, in a very great degree, from the want of proper endowments for the Vicarages, the great tithes having been in days of yore lost," says:

"I am not able to answer that question. I think one great cause of it is this, that persons are so much more ready to build a Church than to provide for the wants of the Clergyman afterwards. I find no difficulty in getting funds to build a Church; *but when you remind persons that the Clergyman must live, and ask for an endowment, there is the greatest possible difficulty in obtaining it.*"

187. If those Churches had not been built, the endowment would not have been greater?

"No; but I think there is a general impression among people that, when a Church is built, the Church can take care of itself. I think, in certain circumstances, if the facts of the spiritual destitution were to be pressed upon the people to a greater extent before a Church was built, perhaps they would be more willing to provide an endowment."

188. You conceive that the building of a Church may have operated against the making of such provision as otherwise might have been made through the false impression it creates that a provision has been made, where it really is wanting as much as ever?

"Yes. I think that one corrective of the evil would be to point out the necessity of a clergyman being located among the people, as a prior necessity to the erection of a Church.

I think the principle of Sir Robert Peel's Act is an invaluable principle, to place a Clergyman in a district, first; let him evangelise the district, and then the Church will follow. *If you build the Church first, it will generally happen that the poor Clergyman must get on as he can afterwards.*"

W. RIVINGTON, Esq., a gentleman very "conversant with the Church Building Societies of the Metropolis," is asked:

3037. Have you considered the question of Endowments at all?

"Yes."

3038. As bearing upon the efficiency of the Clergy?

"Yes; I think that our great difficulty, as to Church extension, is the want of endowments; I think, if we could only provide a sufficient income for all the new parishes or districts which we create, the main difficulty of Church extension, even upon the voluntary system, would be got over."

The REV. T. F. STOOKS, Honorary Secretary to the London Diocesan Church Building Society, is asked:

1309. Is it necessary, in your estimation, as the best course, to try to procure additional clergy?

"Certainly, in the first instance."

1310. You feel that the great want is that of Clergy?

"Yes; the crying want is of Clergy."

1311. With an increase of the Clergy, the auxiliary buildings would be much better filled?

"Yes; and I also believe that the new ones would follow more easily."

The HON. and REV. G. YORKE, Vicar of St. Philip's, Birmingham, having stated that the clergy of Birmingham are very indifferently provided for, is asked:

4397. By indifferently, do you mean poorly?

"Very poorly indeed; they are chiefly dependent upon seat rents. In some cases, where the Clergyman is very popular, and attracts a large number of hearers, his Church is well filled, and his seat-rents are tolerably large: but it is a very uncertain and very precarious income; when a man's strength fails, and his powers are deteriorated, the whole thing falls off."

4431. If the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were to give a large sum of money, proportionate to the population and wants of Birmingham, do you think that that would encourage contributions from the inhabitants?

"I think if it were possible to borrow another £600,000,

and to have a renewal of Sir Robert Peel's Act, endowments could be provided for a certain portion of Clergymen for the new districts; and I think that the Church-building spirit would rise up again in Birmingham. But I think that the idea most deeply impressed upon the people now is, that we want to endow Clergymen rather than to build Churches; forgetting that under our present circumstances the only way by which we can endow a Clergyman is by building a Church and giving him the pew-rents."

4432. You are aware that by the Peel Act the Clergyman was endowed, trusting that the Churches would follow?

"Yes."

4433. That would be in favour of taking care to endow the Clergyman, rather than giving money for a Church?

"Yes; and I say that the endowment of the Clergy would raise up the church-building spirit again."

4434. Do you think that persons are more ready to build a Church than to endow a Clergyman?

"Yes; and for this reason: *you obtain a Clergyman at a much more economical rate by building a Church than by contributing towards an endowment.*"

The Venerable Archdeacon JONES is requested (5866) "to give some suggestions to the Committee, to assist them in meeting the difficulties arising from the present state of things."

"From the experience I have had as far as concerns Liverpool, wherever there is a mass of poor people, or indeed a mixed population, the first thing to do is to apportion a district to a clergyman, with a small endowment, as under Sir Robert Peel's plan. I think that is the very best. If the object is to build Churches on a large scale, you must have immense revenues to accomplish that object; and, when you have accomplished the object, you have only done good in part: the Church is worthless without a zealous active Clergyman: then the question is, how is he to be paid? It is very difficult indeed to raise funds to support a Clergyman, and a very delicate matter. There is no difficulty in raising funds to erect a Church; the great thing is to secure the Clergyman a small income, and then he will soon work his way. If a Church is needed, it will be raised in almost any locality by the aid of societies and of wealthy men. *I think the error in Liverpool has been the going in the reverse way, and erecting a Church first, while the Clergyman is left to starve, and he must have pew-rents to keep him in existence.*"

EFFECT OF VOLUNTARYISM ON THE EPISCOPATE IN AMERICA.

One injurious effect of Voluntaryism not noticed in the previous pages is the undue and dangerous preponderance it gives to wealth, especially in the selection of persons to fill prominent and important posts in the Church. On this head the testimony, given by an American Bishop, is very striking.

Dr. ALONSO POTTER, Bishop of Pensylvania, in one of his charges thus writes:

"As to the support of the Episcopate, if the efficiency of the office is to be greatly increased in the older States, it must be through arrangements which will leave to a Diocese full freedom to select the best man for its peculiar wants, and to a Bishop full opportunity to devote all his time and energies to the duties proper to his office. Neither of these conditions can be so well attained as when this support is furnished by the Diocese at large, as contra-distinguished from any particular parish on the one hand, and from private sources on the other. If it be a condition of his election that he hold the cure of a large and wealthy parish as the means of his support, then the exigencies or tastes of that parish, rather than the wants of the Diocese, will have to be consulted, not only in his selection, but also in the disposal of his time and strength. On the same principle, he should be the stipendiary of no one portion of his flock to the neglect or exclusion of the rest. If, on the other hand, he is to be sustained out of his own private property, not only will his sense of accountability to his Diocese be impaired, but the preference given to him over other candidates for the office, will run the chance of being governed by the very last consideration which ought to rule in a question touching so closely the dearest interests of Christ's Church. There is no danger that wealth shall not be held in sufficiently high estimation in this country, and in our branch of the Christian world. It will bode only evil if it shall ever come to be considered as a necessary qualification for the highest office and honors of a Diocese. Disqualification it surely ought not to be. But all the Church's ministers will, as it seems to me, best serve and most honor her when they are examples and patterns of simplicity and frugality in all her habits; and such they can hardly be expected to be if they are preferred before others mainly on the ground of personal affluence."

BISHOP POTTER, in another charge, testifies to another great evil arising out of the Voluntary system, namely:

UNSETTLED RELATIONS BETWEEN PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

"It is a melancholy fact, that some of the most useful clergymen who have left us during the past year have been constrained to do so by the entire inadequacy of their means of subsistence. I have much fear that we are destined to suffer still severer losses from the same cause. With these facts forced upon me as I travel over the Diocese, and having myself tried in vain for months, and even in one or two instances for more than two years, to supply some vacant parishes with ministerial services, because I have been unable to hold out to men with families the prospect of adequate support. I conceive that I should be wanting in my duty if I did not entreat the renewed attention of the laity to this subject. Where the standard of compensation is highest, there we must expect that talent and efficiency will be carried; and we cannot allow other Dioceses to excel us in this respect without being in danger of suffering a constant drain upon our best and most cherished resources."

"In the report which has been made of clergymen removing from one parish to another, or retiring altogether from the Diocese, the Convention will see renewed occasion to deplore the instability which marks the pastoral relation. I will not attempt to specify all the causes of this instability. In some cases it may be regarded as the fault of a restless age. In others it must certainly be attributed to the inefficiency or imprudence of ministers; in others, to the unreasonable and captious temper of the people. Deducting these cases, however, there will still remain too many in which the parties profess the utmost mutual regard and satisfaction, *and the separation is occasioned only by insufficiency of support. This must be regarded as a chief reason why so many of our parishes, when vacant, find it difficult to obtain a clergyman; and why, when supplied with a zealous and capable ministry, so many are obliged to relinquish it.* THE NUMBER OF EARNEST AND THOROUGHLY EFFICIENT MEN IS INADEQUATE TO THE DEMAND; AND THEY WILL UNAVOIDABLY BE CARRIED WHERE THEY WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL CAN LIVE BY THE GOSPEL."

VOLUNTARYISM IN THE COLONIES.

Letter from the BISHOP OF NEWCASTLE, *Sydney.*

"I do not hesitate to declare that, if State Aid be at once abolished, many parts of this colony will return to a state of heathenism. In many districts where the black heathen, the poor aboriginal, has almost ceased to exist, the white man would soon be reduced to a state of practical atheism. Superficial observers may appeal to the Sustentation Fund of the Free Church in Scotland; or even, as some do, to the success of our own Newcastle Church Society, as proofs that all which is necessary or desirable with respect to religion, may be provided by voluntary contributions. But they are greatly deceived. The annual amount contributed to the Free Church in Scotland is, considered by itself, a large sum; but, when compared with what is really required for the support of religious worship in that communion, is small indeed: so much so, that many wise and influential members of that Church are known to desire earnestly some endowment from the State, and to have consulted how such State Aid could be obtained. In fact, the attempt to support the Free Church of Scotland on the Voluntary principle is acknowledged to be a failure.

"With respect also to the Newcastle Church Society, while we are bound to acknowledge with thankfulness the success which, by the blessing of the Lord, has been granted to it, we must in all truthfulness declare that any person who would depend upon the funds of that Society to maintain, without State Aid, the Clergy who are at present labouring in this Diocese, to say nothing of the additional Clergy who are urgently required, must know but little of the working of that Society; how much anxious thought and personal exertion has been required to obtain its present amount of annual

contributions; and how little these contributions could be increased, if State Aid were withdrawn. In fact, if State Aid were now withdrawn, there is not one of the country districts to the south of this Diocese, which could support its Clergyman. Neither *the Hawkesbury*, nor *Brisbane Water*, nor *the Wollombi*, nor *Hexham*, nor *Raymond Terrace*, nor *the Williams River*, nor *the Paterson*, nor *the Manning*, nor *Port Macquarie* could be depended upon for contributing £300, or even £200 a-year, for the maintenance of its Clergyman. Many Clergymen would, therefore, have to be withdrawn from districts, which have for years enjoyed their ministrations, and in vast tracts of the colony the white man would rapidly sink down into a state of heathenism."

VOLUNTARYISM IN CANADA.

The Rev. John Stannage, of Welland, Canada West, in a letter to an English clerical friend on this subject, writes as follows:

"March 5th, 1859.

. . . . . "The Voluntary System is a dreadful failure. For my part I cannot possibly conceive how it can be defended. In large towns and cities, where wealth and influence are closely combined, a good deal is done; but so much remains undone both in towns and in the rural parts, that party spirit alone, or the most culpable ignorance of facts, can be the cause that the system still finds advocates. Why is it that every Clergyman of the Church, nay, every other sort of Minister in these provinces, has three, or four, or five congregations at great distances from each other under his sole charge? Why is it that I have myself, at this moment, four townships under my charge, and work enough to employ *four* or *five* Clergymen constantly? Why is it that there are 50 townships at this moment, in the Diocese of Huron, as lately declared by the Bishop, without one single Clergyman, and not even a travelling missionary? Why is it that thousands of large settlements in all North America are left destitute of the means of grace, and the people becoming so accustomed to do without public worship that I am told everywhere by such persons that they must confess both themselves and their neighbours have almost forgotten the first principles of religion, and they are now more heathens than Christians? Surely it need not be said that the want of Clergy, of Churches, and of Christian Schools, caused by the want of pecuniary means, or by the total inefficiency of the Voluntary System, is the sole reason for all this deplorable state of things. *Since the "Clergy Reserves" were taken from us we have not been able to fill up the vacancies which have occurred; but would you believe it? The richly endowed Roman Church has increased its number of Clergy in Upper Canada alone, during that time, above* 100. These are facts well established and published, though I have not the documents at hand. *English travellers passing through the chief towns or cities in the United States and in Canada may carry a different impression to England: but what have they seen?* They should visit our poorer population, our back wood settlements, and our fishing shores. I must pass by the other still greater evil of the Voluntary System; I mean the evil effect which must be

the natural consequence of the want of independence in the Clergy themselves, upon the doctrines of the Gospel. The multitude of sectarian creeds produces a very general indifference to all Religion.

Believe me, your affectionate brother in Christ,
JOHN STANNAGE.

THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

Voluntaryists sometimes appeal to the case of the Free Church of Scotland as a proof of the success of their system. But with their system it has no connection whatever. The Free Kirk of Scotland has raised a noble sum by free contributions; but these contributions are not applied to the support of the Ministry, upon the Voluntary, but upon the Fixed Principle. The Ministers of the Free Kirk do not depend upon "nothing beyond the voluntary contributions of attendants." They are paid from a general Sustentation Fund, "fixed, settled, and permanent;" and are provided with manses. That is to say, the members of the Free Church have adopted the principle of endowments so far as they possibly could, and have carefully and wisely avoided the attempt to support their minister and ordinances on the pure Voluntary System. Their endowment is a private one; but it is an endowment "fixed and settled," and therefore, Mr. Miall would tell us, "out of keeping with the genius of Scriptural Christianity." Indeed Mr. Miall, while inconsistently giving the name of the "Voluntary Principle" to this arrangement —directly in the teeth of his own repeated definition of that principle—tells us that he has "no sufficient means of judging whether the benefit of it predominates over its obvious evils."

It may perhaps save Mr. Miall the trouble of further enquiry or thought upon the subject, to be reminded that, with the Voluntary Principle, as defined by himself, the Free Kirk of Scotland has nothing whatever to do. Its "obvious evils" and its "benefits" alike belong to the Endowment or Fixed Principle. They may furnish matter of debate between the advocates of private and the advocates of public endowments; but between the supporters of endowments and the voluntaryists they do not come into question at all.

THE OFFERTORY SYSTEM.

The system of entirely free sittings with a weekly offertory instead of pew rents has been tried in a few instances, both in this country and America, and for the most part with

considerable success. This is unquestionably pure Voluntaryism; and the cases, so far as they go, seem to show that in these instances it was superior to the Pew System in providing for the Ministers and Ordinances; but on all other points it shares those disadvantages of the Voluntary System which I have pointed out. It proceeds upon the assumption of there being a congregation already gathered and sufficiently under the influence of Christian principle to be willing to give liberally in support of their pastor. It can never, therefore, be effectually missionary in very poor or thinly-peopled districts: it could never, as the history of early Christianity proves, evangelize the villages. It needs equally with the Pew System men of great pulpit power to draw a congregation; it leaves the Minister still dependent upon the gifts of those whom it is his duty to rebuke; it fails to make provision for his old age; it gives no territorial charge; it suffers from nearly all the evils of the "democratic" system, as described by Mr. James. In short, though possibly in particular instances superior to the Pew System, it is still far below the National and Parochial System of the Church of England.

That it does not always succeed, even financially, appears from the following letter:—

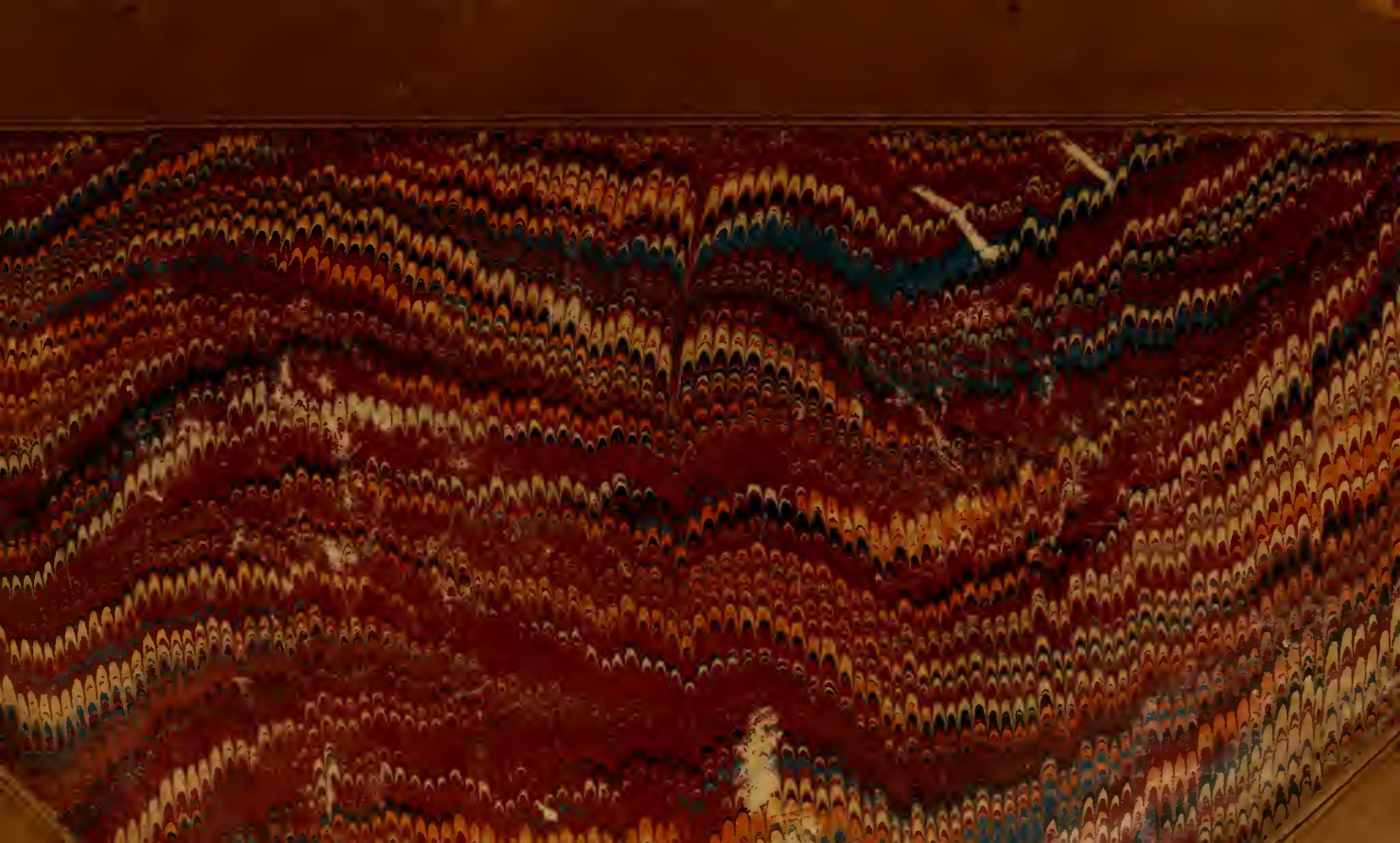
——— *Rectory*, January 11, 1860.

Dear Sir,

"My income at ——— arose almost entirely from seat rents; and these were obliged to be let very low, as the people were nearly all belonging to the working classes. When I went there, I found the old Churchwardens out of pocket; and to one, who had become reduced in circumstances, I subscribed towards his deficiency. *During the six years that I was incumbent there, the congregational collections never equalled the congregational expenses, and every Churchwarden to his annoyance was considerably out of pocket.* I may add that when I went there the Church was in a ruinous state; this was rectified through my becoming "a beggar" far and wide: *but it broke me down in health and spirits, and took me from my proper work.* The population was about 3,500. My congregations were good; and generally, I believe, I had the goodwill and sympathy of my parishioners; so that the failure arose from a break down of the Voluntary System, not from any particular circumstances beyond the *poverty* of the people.

In the adjoining parish of ———, from which ——— was taken, the Voluntary System in the main answered; but there they had a wealthy community.

Faithfully yours,

———.

Printed by R. E. Peach, 8, Bridge Street, Bath.